

favourite poet is Brecht (rather than, as Whitehead's was, Wordsworth.)

The connection with Nietzsche is strained to breaking-point in *Anti-Oedipus*, but even in *Nietzsche and Philosophy* there are many places at which Nietzsche is associated with remarks which would probably have struck him as more, and insufferably, Parisian. Deleuze mentions, for example, that "The use of philosophy is to *sadden*." So much for the gay science. Again, Deleuze expects us to swallow de Sade whole: "Pain has only one meaning: giving pleasure to someone, giving pleasure to someone who inflicts or contemplates pain." He cites some supporting texts from Nietzsche, but these conflict with the more typically Nietzschean line of thought which says that nothing has "only one" meaning (but rather as many as there are perspectives in which it can be placed), and that de Sade's was a paradigmatically "reactive" perspective.

The trouble with such flexible definitions of terms like "active" and "affirmation", and with such Brechtian metaphysics, is that it is all too easy. One can display one's brilliance simply by gearing up and down between levels of abstraction and degrees of vagueness as needed, so that "active" means something quite specific on one page and is roughly synonymous with "praiseworthy" on the next. One can thus say practically anything one likes

and make it sound harshly inevitable. It is true that Nietzsche himself indulged in this sort of fireworks, but it is hard to see why someone of Deleuze's talents should cultivate and imitate the more fatuous side of Nietzsche. Deleuze is much better when he eschews metaphysics in favour of the familiar anti-Hegelian polemic which Heidegger and Derrida also take over from Nietzsche. In those parts of the book, he has good, if debatable, things to say about why "there is no possible compromise between Hegel and Nietzsche", about "the positivity of the real" as something "primarily manufactured by the dialectic itself with the products of the negative" and about why "sense and value", rather than truth, is "the element in which thought moves".

Schacht's Nietzsche may be less interesting than Deleuze's, but his book is a better example of its kind than Deleuze's is of its. Schacht does an honest and thorough job of sorting out Nietzsche's thought and offering it for our inspection. By contrast, what is good in Deleuze is not particularly new, and what is new – the beginnings of the "philosophy of desire" – threatens an even more tedious "modern scholasticism" (Deleuze's own description of phenomenology) than the one it hopes to replace. Schacht is surely right in thinking that we have to start from where we are in thinking about Nietzsche. We cannot

get anywhere if we pretend, like Deleuze, to be living in what Lukács called the "Grand Hotel Abgrund", located light-years away from the world which provokes our day-to-day moral and political deliberations.

Schacht shows that Nietzsche was taking advantage of tensions within the vocabulary of such daily deliberations, and that there are argumentative as well as dramatic ways to get from the relative soundness of such vocabularies to Nietzsche's relative unsoundness. Deleuze's insistence that we cut all argumentative links, that Nietzsche cannot coexist in the same universe of discourse as common sense and the philosophical tradition, tends to boomerang. It makes common sense, the philosophical tradition and Hegel look better than they should. Such over-insistence undoes the good work of dialectical subversion which Nietzsche accomplished. If we have to choose between dialectic and neologicist system-building *ex nihilo*, then we had better stick with dialectic a while longer. Schacht may be too concerned to make Nietzsche "cognitive" rather than "literary", too reluctant to follow up on Nietzsche's own subversion of the cognitive-literary distinction. But he does help us get hold of the lines of argument which Nietzsche employed in this subversive work, lines which might, if extended a bit, let us get rid of Deleuze's genealogy-dialectic distinction as well.

Tackling the Titan

Michael Tanner

MARTIN GREGOR-DELLIN

Richard Wagner: His Life, His Work, His Century
Translated by J. Maxwell Brownjohn
575pp. Collins. £17.50.
0002166690

For those of us for whom life would be intolerable without Wagner's art, several questions present themselves urgently. And even for people in whose lives his work plays a smaller though still a significant role, or who feel hostile to it, the questions still press. Given that in each of his major works we feel the impact of a whole personality, that they are in the fullest and strongest sense "expressive", and that the personality expressed is an extremely powerful and dominating one; the need to explore the biography of the author of them is much more pressing than it is in the case of many other artists, including supremely great ones. This, among other reasons, is why there is such a plethora of Wagner biographies, quite apart from the enormous number of books which examine the nature of his art, its influence on the most miscellaneous collection of important figures, from Baudelaire to Hitler, and the ideological views he put forth in innumerable prose works, and in his conversations, almost entirely recorded by Cosima in her Diaries.

It is also an extraordinarily well-documented life. Not only was Wagner a copious correspondent, some of whose letters are still coming to light, but he also dictated to Cosima a highly tendentious autobiography the impression he made on many of his contemporaries was so strong that we have a huge number of reminiscences of him, and from a relatively early stage he was so controversial a figure that his activities, artistic and otherwise, were the subject of unrelenting attention and publicity. So the intending biographer has a vast amount of data to consider, including many previous biographies, which themselves present many problems. The first, and complete, one, by Gluckstadt, is the work of a disciple, and therefore contains besides a great deal of invaluable information, much more hagiography, and distortions of many of the most controversial incidents in the Master's life. Not surprisingly, it provoked many works written in reaction against it. Thus the pattern was set early on: accounts of Wagner's life were either for or against. It has proved, over a century, a very difficult pattern to break. The classic attempt to transcend it, to produce something truly objective, was Ernest Newman's four-volume work, written in the difficult years from 1930 to 1945, and drawing on as many

primary sources as he had available to him. It remains a staggering achievement, and despite its prodigious length, the most readable of Wagner biographies. Newman realized that the more day-to-day detail he included, the more fascinating the story would be. It is only in the last volume that his sense of proportion deserts him, and the detective gains the upper hand, so that, for instance, he devotes many pages to determining the precise date of Nietzsche's departure from Bayreuth, but omits to provide the dates of the first complete performance of *The Ring*. None the less his work, which astonishingly has never been translated into German, remains the point of departure for all subsequent biographers. The next significant addition to a fairly grand scale was Curt von Westernhagen's *Wagner* (German edition 1968, English edition 1977). But while it incorporates a great deal of material that was not available to Newman, it is essentially a devotional work, primarily recommending as late-night reading for the faithful. In the same year, Robert W. Gutman's *Richard Wagner: The Man, His Mind and His Music* appeared in the United States and England, and was translated into German two years later. It is a sustained – very sustained – hymn of hatred, in which Wagner is given the benefit of no doubts; indeed, there are no doubts. He emerges as a "characterless ogre", who produced an oeuvre fascinating only on account of its combination of a comprehensive loathing for non-Aryan mankind and pathologically intense sexuality.

Since then, there has been a steady stream of biographies which have been little more than rehashes of what was previously available; except that since the publication of Cosima's *Diaries* in 1976 and 1977, it has been possible, or rather, it has been necessary, to add details about Wagner's daily life, his family, and so on. But the thing to do, in fact, is to read Cosima's *Diaries* complete. They are incomparable. Even so, a genuinely new biography has long been needed, to take account of the many discoveries, some of them rather important, that have been made in recent years. Courage is needed: the Wagner experts, of whom the most notable English representative is John Deathridge, the Roumanian of Wagner scholarship, are vigilant and merciless. It is almost not true, as Carl Dahlhaus writes, that in the introduction to *Richard Wagner's Music Drama*, that "the story of Wagner's life has been told so often that it can be told no longer". Time-honoured myths, such as Wagner's own account of the musical inception of *Das Rheingold* at La Spezia, while recovering from an attack of dysentery, have to be dismantled. More important, the concluded course of his relationship to Meyerbeer has to be re-charted, re-evaluated. A combination of pain-

taking scholarship, musicological expertise and psychological penetration is the least that's required.

With the publication in Germany in 1981 of Martin Gregor-Dellin's large but not overwhelming book *Richard Wagner: Sein Leben, Sein Werk, Sein Jahrhundert* it looked as if one's hopes might have found something approaching fulfilment. Gregor-Dellin is a *Schriftsteller*, that is to say a man of letters who, being German, knows much more about many more subjects than men of letters in other countries can be expected to. Eleven years ago he published a useful *Wagner Chronik*, an annotated list of dates of a kind that for some reason we don't go in for here, helpful as they are. He co-edited, with Dietrich Mack, Cosima's *Diaries*, though it can't be said he made a very good job either of the annotations or of the index. None the less, he is clearly steeped in his subject. Furthermore, he is the leading authority on Klaus Mann, a literary critic of wide range, a fluent, pleasing style, a remarkable range of cultural reference and a very balanced view of things. His book is notable for its cool (in the best sense) tone, and its general lack of partisanship. It is not surprising that it has been widely hailed as the book on Wagner that we've been waiting for.

However, there has been one pleasing note of discord: Hartmut Zelinsky, Germany's up-market answer to Robert Gutman, has produced an enormous review of Gregor-Dellin's book in *Musik-Konzepte* 25, entitled "Salvation in 'Narcissus'". He finds the book scarcely any improvement on old-style apologetics – if anything, worse in virtue of its elaborate display of fair-mindedness. He is particularly furious with Gregor-Dellin for his lengthy, with Wagner over his head, and for his failure to see what a dire cultural-political omen Wagner was. On many detailed points Zelinsky makes his case. But as Gregor-Dellin notes in the chapter called "The Wagner Spirit and the Great War", was so inconsistent a thinker, Wagner down as, Yvor Winters wrote of T. S. Eliot, "with equal dignity and firmness on both sides of any question", that perhaps it's vain to seek salvation in precision, at least as far as his discursively expressed opinions go. Or, for that matter, his actions: the number of Jews among his closest friends was astonishing, and indeed would be for anyone, however pro-Semitic they might be. Only the most fervent anti-Semite would deny sincerely to the name of Wagner wrote in his own hand about himself in Cosima's diary on June 18, 1869: "He complained calling 'Jew' by saying them to leave. His moral inclinations, undeveloped, he could do nothing else other wise everything would turn out."

badly; to be a thoroughly moral person demanded complete self-sacrifice."

This quotation focuses for the reviewer the two central issues in dealing with this book. The first is what it says, which I shall return to. The second is that it occurs at the end of Gregor-Dellin's important chapter "Genius, Work, and Character", and Gregor-Dellin writes about it: "It is the most authentic thing there is to be read about him in the Diaries." But it does not appear in the English translation under review. Nor does approximately half of the German text, which runs to 843 closely-printed pages. The English version is 524 pages long, and is not closely printed. Nowhere is there any hint that this exceedingly drastic abridgement, has been perpetrated, nor, a *fortiori*, any indication as to who is responsible for it. One must assume that it is the translator, who has more or less turned the original into simply another biography of Wagner, scarcely distinguishable from the never-ending stream, except for the correction of a few common errors and the inclusion of fragments of criticism and speculation. There is nothing more about "His Century" than is absolutely necessary for the understanding of "His Life", and there is very little indeed about "His Work". The abridging is often done carelessly, too; on page 106, for example, we are told of the original draft of *Der fliegende Holländer* that "the action still took place on the Scottish coast". But since the account in the original German (page 128ff) is omitted, the "still" is meaningless. Again, on page 196 we read of Jessie Laussot: "*Wieland der Schmied* appealed to her more than *Siegfried* had, and she promptly identified herself with the 'swan bride'." But the account of *Wieland der Schmied* has also been omitted, fascinating as it is, so that the remark is unintelligible. Examples could, as they say, be multiplied indefinitely. What matters is that Gregor-Dellin's book has been ruined.

It is, in any case, a strange work. Intent on demythologizing Wagner, he constructs a haphazard myth of his own. Thus some of his chapter headings are: "Wilhelm Meister's Youth" (in German the English is simply "Apprenticeship"), "Dr. Richard Faust in Dresden", "The World Is My Idea" (the opening sentence of Schopenhauer's *magnus opus*), and "Redemption for the Redeemer" (the closing words of *Parzifal*). And the beginning of his Postlude is an italicized quotation (in the German edition) from the final sentence of *Death in Venice*: "On the same day I was shocked and respectful received the news of his death." It is de-mythologized and modified in English, and with no indication that it is a semi-quotation. It isn't clear to me what is

references to German culture, unless it is an ironic interplay between some of its central themes and characters on the one hand, and Wagner's life on the other. But if this is what it means, what does it gain? And if the suggestion is that Wagner was deliberately acting out literary roles, it is manifestly unfair. True to his time and calling, Gregor-Dellin does make it clear how time to time that he finds problems in being Wagner's biographer. "The effect of Wagner's life on outsiders, as compared with that of other men of genius", he writes, "has a troublesome peculiarity that requires explanation. Observers of his career experience no shared sense of exaltation, or only a vague and questionable way. They cannot identify with his propensity for the great and Titanic, only – and to a limited extent – with the more human aspects of his joys and cares, his efforts to be less than his own worst enemy." This puzzling passage indicates an obtrusive personal confrontation between biographer and subject. Who are the observers (that he is talking about, apart from himself)? For many of us, to read Wagner's life is to have a sense of unique fulfillment against shattering odds, a sense of completeness that few lives can give. It is a few pages later that Gregor-Dellin quotes the passage by Wagner given above. Is it the fact that Wagner felt he had left his "moral inclinations undeveloped", and that many people feel that he over-developed his immoral inclinations, that makes Gregor-Dellin increasingly uneasy as his book draws to a close? There is no doubt that, faced with a colossal genius who was possessed of many apparently contradictory qualities, the mental issues about the relationship between art and life are presented to the case of Wagner with unique forcefulness. Whether Gregor-Dellin could make any very substantial contributions to their clarification is unclear to me. For he has compromised himself, in any case, by producing a book for a wide, and, in a point, popular audience, cultivated enough to be titillated by the whole cultural references, but hardly willing to sit out the long and difficult discussions which would make a long book into a monumental one. If his book is a milestone, it is one which indicates that there is still a very long way to go.

It remains to add only, in reprehension of the English version, that the index is inadequate, that it shares with the original an irritating refusal to provide crucial references, and that the bibliography is simply a list of "Apprenticeship". "Dr. Richard Faust in Dresden", "The World Is My Idea" (the opening sentence of Schopenhauer's *magnus opus*), and "Redemption for the Redeemer" (the closing words of *Parzifal*). And the beginning of his Postlude is an italicized quotation (in the German edition) from the final sentence of *Death in Venice*: "On the same day I was shocked and respectful received the news of his death." It is de-mythologized and modified in English, and with no indication that it is a semi-quotation. It isn't clear to me what is



A swimming rehearsal for the *Rheingold* at Bayreuth in 1930, from *Musik mit Camera*. Photographs from Seven Decades by Felix H. M. (unnumbered pages. Secker and Warburg. £17.50. 0 436 27170 2).

The grass-roots and below

D. A. Roe

ANDRÉ LEROI-GOURHAN

Le Fil du temps: Ethnologie et préhistoire
384pp. Paris: Fayard. 140 fr.
2215 01240 7

GRAHAME CLARK

The Identity of Man: As seen by an archaeologist
184pp. Methuen. £12.50.
0 416 33550 0

It is something of a coincidence that these works by two towering figures of twentieth-century archaeology should appear at almost the same moment. Both are concerned with the human story and are of broad scope within the fields of archaeology and ethnology, and each also has a retrospective element. André Leroi-Gourhan presents a selection of important papers written between 1935 and 1970, here linked and placed in perspective by a new commentary suitable for a wider audience. Grahame Clark's book, on the other hand, is a new piece of writing, though in it he returns to certain favourite themes and, for anyone who has written as many books as he has, it must be virtually impossible at this stage not to be retrospective, at least in part. In any case, retrospection by authors who have completed such careers as these in the academic world is highly desirable and does not prevent them from looking forward too.

If we were to judge solely from these texts and their references, we might conclude that neither author was aware of the other's existence, which would be untrue. It is harder to estimate how well each may be known in the other's country, outside archaeological circles. If these two books were massive technical monographs, they might well include discrete summaries in French and English and, maybe, other languages too. Perhaps in due course both will be translated; though to be sure, those who follow Professor Clark's arguments to their logical conclusion may well find themselves convinced that linguistic barriers should be carefully preserved. Meanwhile, the reviewer would risk a small bet that Leroi-Gourhan is almost entirely known in England (outside the trade) as the author of a large-format book on Palaeolithic Art, with stunningly beautiful photographs, of which the English version entitled *The Art of Prehistoric Man in Western Europe*, was published by Thames and Hudson in 1968. That work was far more than a finely illustrated corpus, because in it Leroi-Gourhan proposed a new, quite new theory of Palaeolithic cave art, based upon the selection and grouping of the animals and signs painted and engraved on the walls of the "sanctuaries" in certain caves, which he saw in terms of male and female symbolism. Articles concerning the development of this hypothesis will also be found in *Le Fil du temps*.

The research that led to *The Art of Prehistoric Man in Western Europe* occupied Leroi-Gourhan for rather more than ten years and the result was magnificent, but it represents only one of his achievements and one of his very many productive interests. For example, neither his excavations at Arcy-sur-Cure (Yonne), nor those at Pincevent (Seine-et-Marne) achieved scientific status, but their archaeological importance is absolutely outstanding. At Arcy-sur-Cure a group of caves, brilliantly excavated, yielded by far the best available sequence covering the period some 50,000-30,000 years ago when Middle Palaeolithic and archaic types of hominid were replaced by the physically modern sub-species *Homo sapiens sapiens*, to which all living humans belong. At Arcy, it was possible to show not merely the details of changing tool typology, but also dynamic changes in the whole human way of life and perception of the contemporary world. At Pincevent, meticulous excavation, which introduced new techniques and set new standards for Palaeolithic archaeology, gradually revealed an

undisturbed Magdalenian camp-site, occupied by reindeer hunters of Late Glacial age, some 12,000 years ago. The site was preserved in such detail that it looked as if the occupants had only just left, with the ashes barely cold in the hearths. The collected papers in this volume have much to say about all these things and many others, notably Leroi-Gourhan's involvement with ethnology. One can read what was achieved, how the work was done, and what are Leroi-Gourhan's wider interpretations, following as one proceeds the connecting thread of his changing interests.

Grahame Clark's book is a very different affair but, as one would expect, it too reflects the broad outline of its author's career and developing interests. In his early days at Cambridge, Clark studied the Mesolithic archaeology of Britain and northern Europe, giving it the basic shape and much of the detail that continued to be taught for thirty or forty years. In the period just before the Second World War, and the ten years or so that followed it, the kinds of archaeology with which Clark was involved became, largely through his efforts, an integral part of Quaternary Research: the human occupation record was increasingly being seen in intimate relationship to its ecological setting as part of the single dynamic system which the natural world constituted. At least some of the ideas so noisily put forward in the new archaeology of the late 1960s and early 1970s had been explicitly set out by Clark long before, for example in his *Prehistoric Europe: the economic basis*, published by Methuen in 1952, and no one could accuse him of seeing archaeology in terms of culture-history alone.

Clark was Disney Professor of Archaeology at Cambridge for twenty years from 1953 and then became Master of Peterhouse, retiring in 1980. During his tenure of the chair, the traditional links at Cambridge between archaeology, anthropology and ethnology were very strong and the coverage of the archaeological teaching also became very wide, as was appropriate to a period which saw a tremendous expansion of popular interest in archaeology in Britain and many other countries. One can see how all these factors operated constantly to broaden Clark's interests and horizon of study and led him as early as 1961 to publish his *World Prehistory: an outline and to produce subsequent revised versions*. The same evolution of thought that took him from his early site reports and specific studies of aspects of Mesolithic technology to an increasing concentration on the overviews that he was perhaps uniquely well placed to write, has also produced the present work, *The Identity of Man*.

In it, he draws widely on world prehistory and on ethnology, and to a lesser extent on biological anthropology, to support a number of lines of argument. Prehistory and ethnology are sister disciplines, the first seeking to deduce from surviving material evidence those same kinds of information about past societies which in the second it is possible to observe directly in "present" and recent "industrial" human groups: the combination aims to show how, and even why, the remote human past has led to the present and hence how man has obtained his identity. Clark lays strong emphasis on the growth of cultural diversity, first with infinite slowness and later with increasing speed. To this precious diversity, local styles and traditions and individual social systems have all contributed vitally. The most successful people of the past were those with strongly hierarchical systems that gave the greatest concentrations of wealth, power and influence to a dominant ruling class. This claim he documents with an impressive, sweeping view of some of the great ancient civilizations, whose discovery created the peaks of world archaeology – Sumerians, Egyptians, high cultures in China and so forth – but, by also considering both the remoter past and the ethnographic present, he shows that the principle always held good and still does.

The great hierarchical cultures.

produced all that is best in the record of human art and artefacts, by virtue of their capacity at the top of the scale to consume, accompanied by power not merely to enable but ultimately to command artistic and technological achievement of almost any order. Thus the very inequality within such societies produced the dynamic forces that set man further apart from his own animal background and hence, gave him the qualities of his human identity. In the animal world, diversity is not cultural but merely biological in its origin, so that within any species the situation is essentially static. Man, on the other hand, generates culturally the very diversity that carries him forward.

So far so good, but that is not all. The book's last chapter is called "Homogenization and Dehumanization" and in it Clark argues that it is egalitarian systems which destroy all that is worthwhile in human achievement and therefore attack human nature itself. Almost as pernicious are the ease and speed of modern communication, whether of goods or ideas. It is not merely the stratification of society within individual nations that is being eroded away, but also the national characteristics which distinguish one country from another. Only at our grave peril do we remove class distinctions, distribute wealth equally, bring minority groups into the common fold and break down national barriers, for thus we undermine the very foundations of human identity which it has taken two and a half million years to establish. This time Clark supports his contention by observing many depressing trends in our contemporary institutions, arts and artefacts, increasing as the "dynamic qualities of inequality" become lost to us. The message looks clear: stop the rot, down with social equality, restore maximum privileges to the upper classes and don't have too much to do with all those foreigners. Quite a programme in an election year!

Grahame Clark's view of such processes gloriously at work in the past is highly convincing and plenty of his readers may feel a strong if guilty inclination to accept also his assessment of the present. Its implications for the future, though, if the kind of hierarchy to return that got the pyramids built with such ruthless efficiency – and look how highly we regard the pyramids – then one might reserve the right to form one's views according to where one had to stand in the system oneself. There would doubtless be attractions at the top of the tree, where the fruit ripens, but one could envisage a certain element of resentment down at the grass-roots level, of which we hear so much these days. Those who use that tiresome cliché probably never reflect that, to an archaeologist, the grass-roots occur right at the top of the sequence and anything worth bothering about comes much further down. And there lies the answer to the conundrum facing any reader who would like to feel with a clear conscience that Clark is right: he is writing as an archaeologist, and has even reminded us of this in the full title of the book. It is therefore completely appropriate that in considering the contemporary situation he should concentrate on our buildings, our art-styles and our durable material objects, deploring their lowered quality and deadly uniformity: they are what will survive to become the archaeological sites and finds of the future. It is on them that the Clarks and the Leroi-Gourhans of the distant future will work with minute precision and eventually pass judgment on us accordingly. Yes, of course they will try to see into our minds, just as we try to perceive the thinking behind Palaeolithic art or Neolithic temples, but their actual primary evidence, like ours, will consist of such objects as have survived. Good luck to them, but they may indeed have a terrible time of it if we do not follow the path pointed out to us by Professor Clark. One's heart bleeds for the examiners of their students' doctoral theses, and how will they write books as entertaining as these two? Meanwhile, if you want a down-to-earth view of the current human situation, always ask an archaeologist.

Neill of Summerhill

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The lie transparent

David Montrose

ROBERT NYE

The Facts of Life and other fictions
153pp. Hamish Hamilton. £7.95.
0 241 11008 4

Robert Nye has stated that he does not so much write short stories as tall tales (his novels display the same tendency). Such tales are the most self-reflexive of fictions – the conventional short story is intended as a credible lie, but the tall tale is transparently incredible, the more inventively so the better. Since the form largely dispenses with the traditional components of realism – character, milieu, and so forth – a great deal depends on the teller's ability to convince arresting plots.

Nye's previous set of fictions, *Tales I Told My Mother*, displayed plenty of ingenuity in this regard. Its nine tales, bizarre enough when taken separately, came together – in a deliberately tangential manner – to produce an unclassifiable whole incorporating, among other people and things, various members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, a Chinese giant, a reinterpretation of Chatterton's suicide, the Wandering Jew, and a lost novel by Emily Brontë. Comparable invention is, alas, rarely evident in the unconnected tales of *The Facts of Life*, which has little in common with the dark imaginings of its predecessor except "Prunty", a tiny fragment from that "missing" Brontë MS.

Everyday life, of course, abounds

Space invaders

Mary Furness

JANET HOBHOUSE

Dancing in the Dark
229pp. Cape. £7.95.
0 224 02667 6

Janet Hobhouse dedicates her second novel *Dancing in the Dark* to a group of people (Cable, Jean-Loup, Michael, Larry, Annie, Murdoch and Tony) who, judging by names, could just as well be characters in the novel: Gabriella, Morgan, Preston, Kate, Heinz, Hubert, Mickey, Liza and Richard are some of them.

These characters have only one interest in life – "relationships" – and between them they occupy every position in the continuum. Gabriella and Morgan are the couple going through the stage of questioning the

nature and value of their marriage. Claudio is the unattached gay who has "made his nest inside" it. He seems to Gabriella to create a civilized atmosphere of language and pleasure in sharp contrast to her life with Morgan. Kate, who also lives with them, exemplifies another sort of lonely existence; she has recently been abandoned by her husband Richard, who has left her for her best friend Liza. Richard and Liza, although guilty, also feel that passion justifies their union. A large cast of gays skips in and out of the novel, leading the life that Gabriella finds so seductive: parties, clubs, sex and friendship strictly divided; beautiful clothes and apartments on a shoestring, jobs a peripheral concern, only kept to provide the wherewithal for hedonism.

All of them, being obsessed by one thing (the state of their lives *sur le plan sexuel*) are flat and uninteresting; the implicit assumption of the novel is that nothing matters apart from "the personal", and Janet Hobhouse sees no need to tell us about anything else.

The novel presents us with an Aunt Sally, set up in order to be knocked down; its overall effect is of a dramatized dinner party conversation, whose subject is "Is it better to be single, as most gays are most of the time, or as Kate is, than to be in a couple? Does the comfort of coupledom make up for the curtailment of individual liberty?" Gabriella embarks on a little voyage of discovery to find out. At first she thinks she has found a solution in the gay life; it seems, well, so gay, full of gentle consideration, friendships, and also seems to involve none of the difficulties and boredom of conventional heterosexual life. But she has an unsatisfactory romantic liaison with Preston, who, in spite of all his kind, thoughtful, slightly embarrassed flattery, does not really want her; her continuing fixation with this homosexual sex seems to be driving Morgan away, and she begins to wonder. The couple go to Mexico to begin the delicate process of getting back together, with, as part of its price, the result that Claudio, their friend, to times of conjugal unhappiness, is brutally rejected in their new-found exclusivity. By capitulating, Gabriella has again humiliated herself in Morgan, and lost herself.

She discusses the whole question with Liza, who appears to be the

philosophical mouthpiece of the book; Liza declares that she felt herself being "taken over" by Richard but decided to "pull out". Liza also says (wouldn't any normal person?) that there is more to life than one consuming and overriding passion that life will not conform to, nor be confined by, that one thing alone. Life also includes friends, work and a great deal more.

Janet Hobhouse fails to convince that worries about that one thing alone are enough to sustain a novel. She is good at creating atmosphere, particularly an oppressive one (that of the clubs, for example), and some scenes are evoked with a degree of insight (like that in which Gabriella and Morgan try to repair their marriage), but both atmospheres and feelings are relentlessly spelt out. There is an insistent use of the word "fuck" (for realism) and an almost equally insistent bandying about of "love" (for romance). More generally, her style obscures rather than clarifies; since her meaning is always simple (like her characters) it is not helped by being expressed in an over-complicated way.

Claudio began to seem to Morgan a civilizing influence, a man who neither completed in the subtle manner of the crowd at work, nor flaunted the gains of a career under the dismal evidence of a horribly embraced middle age, as had been the case with such college playmates as Gabriella's tolerance and his own passion had allowed.

The old for Jamesian complexity is undermined by the triviality of those observations, "civilizing influence", "subtle manner", "dismal evidence", "gentle", "subtle", "dismal evidence", "sound so leader. Hobhouse also leans heavily on the metaphor of boxes: "her own constraint held her inside the false coldness"; "she felt the floor of her despair"; Kate is "fresh inside" a conviction, Gabriella wants to lead a "horizontal" life (ie, skimming along the surface) whereas Morgan wants a "vertical" one. Never has space been so emptily filled.

The establishment of a new literary award in honour of Dylan Thomas has recently been announced. The first prize will be given to a short story writer or poet for work published or broadcast during the last five years. Further information from: The Poetry Society, 21 Earl's Court Square, London SW5 8PH.

God preserve me... from Goody Gock and her children desire which will force me into the factory for good, and I'll be taking factories and council flats seriously and look pale and ashen, and be forty, at my machine, hoping for a break and knowing I won't get one except by bloody brown-nosing to get made foreman. Fucking foreman! Fuck fore-men and fuck being polite to guvners who've got basthouses in Kent and one room in Judd Street, with a nice young bird in it who wears...

(There follows a resentful sexual fantasy.) An affair with Nancy promises escape but leads instead to the less figurative imprisonment with which his story begins and ends – a life

A lasting storm

John Melmoth

M. S. POWER

Hunt for the Autumn Clowns
160pp. Chatto and Windus/Hogarth Press. £7.95 (paperback, £3.50).
0 7011 2676 0

The fact that the principal character in *Hunt for the Autumn Clowns* is named Pericles ought to mean that the pursuit of Shakespearean parallels cannot, in all conscience, be forgone. In fact the novel disavows any generic resemblance to romance and has no truck with themes of resolution. Still, the Prince of Tyre's assertion that "Murder is as near to just as flame to smoke" casts light upon the doings of his namesake, and Marina's plaint "the world to me is like a lasting storm" suggests a state of mind shared by M. S. Power's protagonists.

Pericles Story is sixteen, beautiful, heroically strong (able to untwist rusted drainpipes) and highly-sexed; gentle but capable of murderous cruelty, he is intellectually maimed, "lumbered" with a mental clumsiness tragically at odds with his physical grace. His teacher, Tricia Hudson, mid-thirties-ish, finds consolation for the thwarting of her maternal drives by immersing herself in the fictions of Proust, Joyce and Melville and by planning idyllic holidays in the Greek islands. Father Denis Redmond, one-time juvenile lead in *The Winslow Boy*, actor manqué and whisky priest, is lacerated by his loss of faith but continues to play his part as the booze-befuddled custodian of a "soulless petrified residue of extinct doctrine".

In the course of a year their destinies merge and fuse. Pericles over-responds to Miss Hudson's sentimental religious instruction, Father Redmond is persuaded to exorcise whatever demons inhabit Pericles and, when not stupid with drink, dispenses platitudes to Tricia who confesses her desire for her pupil. It is apparent from the outset

that such mutual preoccupation must lead to perdition, but that does nothing to mitigate the awfulness of the eventual catastrophe.

The events of the novel take place on an island off the west coast of Ireland, picturesquely battered by the Atlantic. Power strongly resists any temptation to shroud his first novel in Celtic twilight or to flesh it out with stage Irishisms. The life of this isolated community is hard, violent and incestuous – a super-heated midge of lust and slaughter. The gothic quality of existence – provincial and full of foreboding – is caught in prose that is resolutely lucid and contemporary.

Pericles, like Faulkner's Benji, has trouble with time and is puzzled by the capriciousness of clocks. Possessed only tenuous notions of before and after, he performs in a continuous present. Assailed by sensations, driven by inchoate desires, misled by his own notions of continuity, he has to deal with a world in which objects and events share a bewildering ambivalence, in which everything seems mysteriously related to everything else. His grandfather's death by drowning is somehow bound up with the farmyard decapitation of a marauding fox; his own dilemma is perceived as identical with that of the outcast crow.

The assumption that identity is a negotiable quality is not peculiar to the dull-witted boy. It is fundamental to the novel's aesthetic and its psychological impact. Neither teacher nor priest can tell where the boy's experience ends and their own begins: "If he did love me it would be just as though I loved myself."

The transitions from one narrative style and sequence to another are managed with impressive confidence. *Hunt for the Autumn Clowns* brings together poetry, criticism, psychoanalysis and eschatological rumination; Power's talents are apparent in the patience and precision with which it achieves its effects and in the virtuosity of its more brazen passages.

The baleful butt

Lewis Jones

JOHN MILNE

London Fields
178pp. Hamish Hamilton. £7.95.
0 241 10980 9

Like *Tyrol*, the novel with which John Milne made his debut last year, *London Fields* is about working class "alienation". Its middle chapter, the turning point in the life of Alfred Hicks (more usually styled "Elfy Hicks"), is set on the Embankment, where Elfy is suffering from the effects of concussion, drink, drugs and love, having recently been hit over the head by a policeman during a raid on a West Indian drinking club, which he visited in pursuit of Nancy, a beautiful African girl. Casting a baleful eye on the city around him, Elfy considers the thought: "It came here before time and it was here before history for the first time to take their fish. They were free men." He bridges, rather sketchily, the gap of years between prehistoric man and himself, and laments his imprisonment in the institutions of marriage and organized labour.

God preserve me... from Goody Gock and her children desire which will force me into the factory for good, and I'll be taking factories and council flats seriously and look pale and ashen, and be forty, at my machine, hoping for a break and knowing I won't get one except by bloody brown-nosing to get made foreman. Fucking foreman! Fuck fore-men and fuck being polite to guvners who've got basthouses in Kent and one room in Judd Street, with a nice young bird in it who wears...

(There follows a resentful sexual fantasy.) An affair with Nancy promises escape but leads instead to the less figurative imprisonment with which his story begins and ends – a life

sentence for murder.

The story is also essentially the same as that of *Tyrol*: a young man betrays his best friend, and himself, through his association with a sophisticated and manipulative woman. In the first novel where the hero was a private soldier, in this one, rather more effectively, it is mixed up with the London underworld and the universal question of crime and punishment. *London Fields* is a refection of its epigraph, a passage from Hume which distinguishes the personal nature of emotion and the public nature of morality.

Milne veers between a conventional narrative and a panicky stream of consciousness, full of bigoted jokes and terrible puns. The two styles are better interwoven than they were in *Tyrol*, but there are intelligence as when the prison psychiatrist, frustrated by Elfy's Cockney ironies, reflects to himself that he "should have took another speciality", and the line association is sometimes excessive.

he saw the cigarette butt; he saw the paving butt; he saw the butt to butt to pink-stained lipstick touched but brilliant pink, visible even in this light cigarette butt which was not flattened as is usual but crumpled, as if whoever she was had taken the trouble to bend and use the paving-edge (butt) as an ashtray for her cigarette butt, and bending so that her butt, or arse, UK style (the dub session version's "arse") almost touched the pavement.

The rather directionless quality of this writing affects the novel as a whole, though there are some moments of facile symbols (in moments of domestic threat, for example, Elfy's habit to throw books at clocks). One reviewer has written: "a new development in the English novel"; but in its way and sympathetic treatment of the low life it reminds me strongly of the early writing of Alan Sillitoe.

ALAN WALKER

Frang Liszt: Volume One, The Virtuoso Years, 1811-1847
481pp. Faber. £20.
0 571 10568 8

The nature and scope of the work Alan Walker has done make it scarcely surprising that this first volume of three took him ten years to write. He is nevertheless an enviable man: it is difficult to think of another musician of anything like the importance and interest of Liszt whose life, nearly a century after his death, so desperately needed full-scale scholarly attention. Between the glittering legend on the one hand, irresistibly appealing to some of its propagators, merely lurid to others, and the daunting mass of archive material and proliferating secondary literature, a huge gap has for years been evident. It is a pleasure to record that Walker's biography promises to fill this gap with conspicuous success.

"Cherchez la femme" has always been the cry of the legend-mongers, dazzled or repelled by the charm which, together with his prodigious talent, made Liszt a star, in the modern sense, unique in nineteenth-century Europe. But "cherchez la femme", in a rather different sense, cannot be avoided as the first motto of the Liszt biographer. From the age of twenty-three, when his mother and his mistress, Marie d'Agouti, supplied the information for the first "life", to far beyond the grave, Liszt was pursued by the biographical devotion, malice, gossip and pure fantasy of an extraordinary number of women. Some of these, of course, were close enough to him for their efforts to look like reliable source material. A man who wants the details of his life and behaviour truthfully recorded for posterity should not take a literary mistress: Liszt had at the centre of his emotional life for forty years first, one, and then another. The spiteful fictions of the resentful and unbalanced Marie d'Agouti were bad for his reputation, certainly. Perhaps even more damaging to the truth was the protective high-mindedness of the humourless Caroline von Sayn-Wittgenstein, who breathed down the neck of the docile official biographer, yet another woman, Lina Ramann, to ensure that a picture of flawless benevolence was all that reached the admiring public. Each of his mistresses further confused his biographer's task by writing some, and occasionally all, of each literary work that appeared over Liszt's own name during her period of influence. This is one of many areas of dispute over which Walker keeps an admirably clear head, realizing that the only hope of getting at something close to the truth is to take each piece of writing as a separate case.

As if the presence on the scene of two ladies of pronounced *parti pris* were not enough, a third, La Mara, edited by far the greater part of Liszt's published correspondence (thirteen volumes of his own letters, and others including his correspondence, with Wagner and Bülow). Although, as Walker says, biographers have more reason to be grateful to La Mara – her real name was Marie Lipsius – than their hitherto scanty use of her material would lead one to suppose, she suffered quite badly from the endemic hero-worship which Liszt inspired. Liszt's letters to at least one unofficial mistress were censored by her in the 1830s; partly to protect his reputation, partly in order not to offend the alarming daughter, Cosima Wagner, and Marie von Sayn-Wittgenstein, of the official mistresses, a situation only too characteristic of the whole-tangled story of biographical distortions. And this is not to mention the novelistic interventions of eccentrics like Olga Jabina, or the many women for whose children friends or enemies claimed Liszt's paternity. *Liszt und die Frauen*, the title of La Mara's book of 1911 describing twenty-six women with whom he had relationships she reckoned wholly creditable to him, could well serve as a phrase to summarize the inaccurate but voluminous "evidence"

from which the historian of Liszt's life has no choice but to start. There were also, it is fair to add, a large number of male memoir-writers, pupils and acquaintances for whom, as Walker puts it, "Liszt's handshake may have been the most memorable event in their lives".

Walker trawls these murky waters with tact, thoroughness and common sense. His account of Liszt's relationship with Marie d'Agouti, which falls within the period covered by this volume, is one of most



A daguerreotype of Liszt, c. 1845, from the book reviewed here.

convincing complexity. Neither Liszt at twenty-one nor, still more, his beautiful countess at twenty-eight (their ages when they met) was a simple character. By setting alongside his detailed account of Liszt's childhood and youth a careful description of Marie's background, family and personal life up to this point, Walker succeeds in making the two follow more comprehensible than they have ever been before. The lonely, self-obsessed woman, whose adored father had died when she was thirteen and who had married a kind, paternal soldier whom she did not love, was bound to make extortionate emotional demands on a young man who, as well as being the most celebrated pianist in the world, was also still an inexperienced boy. A note Liszt wrote her three years after their elopement shows the strain to which her depressive temperament subjected them both: "Love me always, and most of all try to be a little satisfied, a little gay, a little happy if possible."

As the relationship soured, he escaped from her for lengthening periods, crossing and recrossing Europe, giving hundreds of concerts in dozens of cities during the eight years (1839-47) which became known as his *Glanzzeit*. Walker's account of this feat of genius and endurance begins with a chapter on Liszt's pianism which is a model of lucid explanation. Those who have encountered dispiriting barriers of analytical jargon in some recent musicological writing will be relieved to find none in this chapter, nor in the other sections of the book which deal with Liszt's compositions. There is not a paragraph here which will be incomprehensible to anyone with an ordinary amateur knowledge of the keyboard.

With boldly judged selection of detail Walker in this part of the book gives us a stunning but always clear impression of the most extraordinary virtuoso career in musical history. The map and the list of towns and cities in which Liszt gave his more than a thousand concerts remain as essential background in the reader's mind for the incidents described in close-up. The journeys were appalling, the pianos unreliable: Liszt, often ill, had to cope with every shade of audience reaction from hysterical adulation to cold neglect (for instance on his second visit to St Petersburg, after he had expressed sympathy for the Polish cause and over again he responded to appeals to his generosity, playing for charity in a wide variety of causes. There were weeks filled with the glamour of duchesses and decorations for which these years are famous; there were others that took him to Rochdale

Virtuoso and victim

Lucy Beckett

and Preston in the era of *Hard Times*. A concert which the darling of the Salle Erard gave on a rickety square piano to twenty-five people in a hotel room in Clonmel was only the most absurd episode of a ghastly British tour which ended in financial loss and a sprained hand.

The high point of the *Glanzzeit* was Liszt's return to Hungary in 1839-40. It is at controversial moments such as this that the strengths of Walker's work are most evident. Sophisticated Western opinion scoffed, and has continued to

scuff at the spectacle of Liszt in Hungarian costume accepting a ceremonial sword from his country's nobility in Budapest and making patriotic speeches, in French, before cheering mobs. But Walker's case for the genuineness of Liszt's feeling for Hungary rests securely on the early sections of his book. The common charge that Liszt was "not really" Hungarian should be refuted for good by the depth and detail of the new picture of his childhood that emerges from Walker's evidence: The muddy Esterházy sheep-farms of the Burgenland where Liszt's grandfather, a crooked peasant out of a folk-tale, sired twenty-five children and was still conducting his church choir at eighty-four, where Liszt's father worked as an estate overseer but had also tried his vocation as a Franciscan and played the cello under Haydn in summer concerts at Eisenstadt, where gypsies crossed the plains and stamped to wild music round their camp-fires, where Prince Esterházy wielded almost absolute power over his people: this was the world which Liszt left at the age of ten. It is hardly surprising that his ancestral stabilities, succeeded as they were by the rootless wanderings of the virtuoso celebrity, should have exercised a pull on Liszt's emotions for the rest of his

life. He returned to his country the most famous living Hungarian. The rest, in the nationalist turmoil which preceded 1848, may have looked ridiculous to Parisian columnists, but followed, sword and all, as the night the day.

Unlike Byron's, Liszt's national costume was at least his own. His enthusiasm for the cause of his subject country was only part of his historical role as the musician at the very centre of Romanticism. He combined the apparently supernatural performing skill of Paganini with Byron's cosmopolitan salon brilliance, giving a new status and prestige to the figure of "the artist". In the heady Paris of the 1830s, Berlioz, Chopin, Mendelssohn, Heine, Sand, were his friends. The humanitarian ideals of Saint-Simonism inspired him to sit at the feet of Lamennais, who described him as "one of the most beautiful and noble souls that I have met on this earth". He understood, and helped the world to understand, the beginning, the middle and the end of Romantic music, performing Schubert and late Beethoven when no one else was, later fostering the unpopular masterpieces of Berlioz and Wagner.

And yet, this volume ends in 1847, with Liszt retiring, at thirty-five, from his career as a virtuoso, and the "and yet" which clouds his reputation no bigger than a man's hand. But Walker allows its chill to be felt. Some of the bad connotations of the word "artist" were also added to it by Liszt: the whiff of the big top that drifts from the *Glanzzeit* cannot be denied. Shouldn't this judgment and the responsibility thrust on him by his fame have led him to play the "Hammerklavier", say, more often, his transcription of Robert Schumann's *Diabelli* less often? Why did he help, all back away from him later in life? Need he have worn all those decorations? And as for the middle-aged, stout, still with his long hair, taking orders in the Catholic Church – but we are here approaching the destructive incomprehension of Ernest Newman's *The Man Liszt*. Some of these areas of shadow are explored by Walker in this volume; others, no doubt, will be in his later volumes. In the light of two qualities which distinguished Liszt, one from most people always, the other from nearly all the other great Romantics: his innocence and his piety. They are qualities, unequivocal in themselves, which evoke equivocal reactions in others; the key to both is the village boyhood in a backward corner of feudal Eastern Europe. Liszt's innocence won him friends but also lost them. The remarkable kindness shown to him by many people, by the teachers

of his youth, by Marie d'Agouti's husband and brother, by Berlioz and Lamennais and Bettina von Arnim, reflect the goodness in Liszt's own character. But genius, charm and disinterested generosity are too attractive a combination: the great and famous came to the Beethoven Memorial Festival in Bonn in 1845 because Liszt (wearing himself out in the thankless task) organized it; because Liszt organized it, Lola Montez and other disreputable fans came too. Liszt pandered to the whims of royalty. Lola Montez danced on the table, and the great and famous were disgusted. It was a characteristic episode.

About Liszt's piety Walker is neither sentimental nor disbelieving: he recognizes the consistency and inwardness of the faith which connected the obsessive adolescent to the lonely old composer of the *Via Crucis*. He does not, however, attempt to explore the supremely interesting fact that Liszt, almost alone among the great creative figures of the nineteenth century, was not attempting to fill with his art the void left by a rejected God. His claims for music could never be ultimate: this surely explains the particular quality of both his seriousness and his light-heartedness in its cause. (Neither Liszt nor his father, by the way, were priests as Walker says; they were: Liszt took minor orders only; his father was a Franciscan novice, not "novitiate", who came nowhere near ordination; and Franciscans are friars, not monks.)

There are one or two other, less important, slips in the book – a misreading of the *Symphonie Fantastique*, a mistranslation from Latin, for example. But this volume is a splendid achievement. A mass of material has been organized with firmness, judgment and clarity; the footnotes, practically always worth reading, practically never demanding a place in the text, are evidence in themselves of all these virtues. A slight heavy-handedness mars the writing here and there: we don't, for example, need to be informed that remarks and incidents are amusing when they are quoted in the text. The family trees, lists, maps and illustrations are excellent; it is all the more irritating that the index is grossly inadequate for a book of this kind. People will consult it for years after they have read it: they will not be helped by mistakes in page-numbers and alphabetical order, or by the bizarre decision to exclude place-names altogether except for reference to libraries, museums and theatres. One hopes that this failure will be remedied in a full general index when all three volumes are complete.

Publication of this book has been deferred until June 27.

The Metropolitan Opera Classics Library

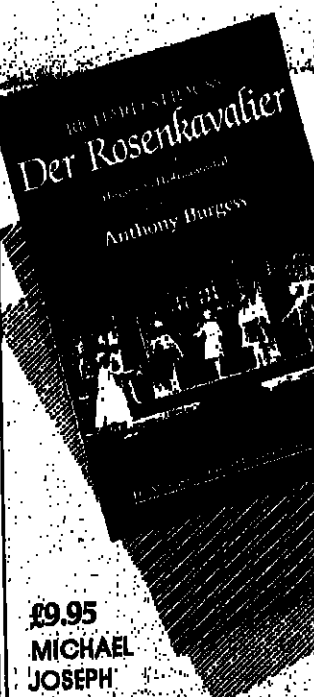
RICHARD STRAUSS

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The weaning of Winston

J. A. Turner

TED MORGAN

Churchill 1874-1915
571pp. Cape. £12.50.
0 224 02044 7

"By the nature of her duties, Mrs Everest developed a physical closeness to Winston that his mother did not have. She vested interest that the sooner he learned to use the potty the sooner she would not have to wash nappies. She held his penis while he urinated, and washed it for him afterwards." Well, it makes a change in a Churchill biography. Martin Gilbert, Henry Pelling, and even the disrespectful Robert Rhodes James, have committed millions of words to print without a mention of the great man's privy member, let alone of his early hygiene. Lacking evidence on the point, they have preferred to leave it to the reader's imagination. Ted Morgan prefers to rely on his own imagination, whence the passage cited springs. The reader fears that there will be more sub-Freudian prurience to come, and he is right.

This is doubly disappointing because Mr Morgan has identified a major biographical opportunity. The official biography of Winston Churchill was undertaken by his son Randolph in 1960. As Roy Foster has shown (TLS, November 28, 1981), Churchill's are not to be relied on when writing about

their fathers. The first two volumes, written under Randolph's direction, were slabs of Victorian monumental masonry, propped up by documentary "Companion Volumes" prepared by a team of academics. It would be hard to write a less interesting account of Churchill's early career than Randolph produced, and the Companion Volumes give ready access to material which is otherwise barred to authors by the Chartwell Trustees. This vicarious research assistance is available for less than £150 in any good bookshop. Here, indeed, is a book waiting to be produced, meeting the demand for an accessible life of a great statesman, and needing little more than to be written down.

From this promising set of materials Morgan has manufactured a "written" is hardly the word - one of the least satisfactory political biographies to appear in recent years. His method, when he has anesthetized his imagination, is to arrange documents from the Companion Volumes, and occasionally from other sources, in chronological order. Sometimes they are rendered into indirect speech, often not; sometimes they are dignified with quotation marks, often not. It is unnerving to find "the dreary steeples of Fermanagh and Tyrone" - perhaps the most memorable put-down of Irish sectarian politics to be uttered this century - appearing as Morgan's own, along with a great many other direct borrowings from *My Early Life* and *The World Crisis*. In defence it can be said that Churchill's words are interesting in themselves, unlike the stenographic records of War Council

Meetings in 1914 and 1915, which Morgan also quotes at length.

There is nothing underhand about these borrowings: everything is acknowledged in cheerfully imprecise footnotes which merely confirm the narrowness of the author's research. A claim in the preface that the work is the result of "research in every available collection of papers that could throw light upon Churchill between his birth of 1915" need not be taken too seriously. Most of the references are to the Companion Volumes and to the official biography. Ninety or so other works are cited, only a few being of any importance. The unpublished material represents perhaps four weeks' efficient work in Oxford, Cambridge and London. No reference is made to specialist historical journals. Morgan is not trying to make professional history accessible to the general reader, but to popularize what is already popular; and thus his work must be assessed.

Even on those terms, this amalgam of Mary Renault and the *Annual Register* is an unlovely book. It condescends to its readers. Major political figures are introduced with mind-furring thumbnail sketches - Lloyd George "the Welsh wizard, the son of a school master who died when David was an infant, so that he was brought up by the village cobbler" for one - while Ian Fleming, no doubt the writer of spy fiction, is left unexplained. Little is said about the historical and political background of Churchill's career, except what is available in the official biography. Morgan's style is hurried without being quick to make a point.

All this might be forgiven if Morgan had anything new to say about Churchill. But the only novelty is a retrospective psychoanalysis, of the Cocktail Party rather than the Freudian or any other school, which gratified his taste for bloodshed, but not his political ambition. This he fulfilled by trading on his name, his gift for inventive journalism, and his mother's connections. Entering Parliament as a Conservative in 1900, on the strength of an ambiguous heroism as a prisoner of the Boers, he changed parties after three years and rose rapidly as a Liberal. He reached Cabinet rank at the age of thirty-four while his former Tory colleagues languished in Opposition. At the Board of Trade and the Home Office, he fought against the Naval Estimates; at the Admiralty he built ships in half-dozen. In every department he antagonized his subordinates by interfering at random in business he only half understood. As First Lord in the first year of the Great War, he presided over a number of spectacular disasters, some, like Antwerp, of his own making. The fiasco of the Dardanelles finished him, but he only resigned when he was stripped of all influence in Cabinet. At forty years of age, as he went to the trenches ready to pay "the well-known forfeit" Churchill had no following and no reputation, except for erratic ambition. But he knew he was a genius, and he knew that he had a star. Arrogant, bloodthirsty, courageous, impatient of inconvenient fact, inconsistent, and convinced of his own rightness; here is the very model of a modern statesperson.

Churchill as a mythical figure is once again near the centre of British politics. Morgan's book, by repeating faithfully what is already known about him,

reminds us of the qualities we seek in our leaders. Born to the purple, unsatisfactory life at home and at Harrow, Prickly and snobbish at Sandhurst, he entered the cavalry, which gratified his taste for bloodshed, but not his political ambition. This he fulfilled by trading on his name, his gift for inventive journalism, and his mother's connections. Entering Parliament as a Conservative in 1900, on the strength of an ambiguous heroism as a prisoner of the Boers, he changed parties after three years and rose rapidly as a Liberal. He reached Cabinet rank at the age of thirty-four while his former Tory colleagues languished in Opposition. At the Board of Trade and the Home Office, he fought against the Naval Estimates; at the Admiralty he built ships in half-dozen. In every department he antagonized his subordinates by interfering at random in business he only half understood. As First Lord in the first year of the Great War, he presided over a number of spectacular disasters, some, like Antwerp, of his own making. The fiasco of the Dardanelles finished him, but he only resigned when he was stripped of all influence in Cabinet. At forty years of age, as he went to the trenches ready to pay "the well-known forfeit" Churchill had no following and no reputation, except for erratic ambition. But he knew he was a genius, and he knew that he had a star. Arrogant, bloodthirsty, courageous, impatient of inconvenient fact, inconsistent, and convinced of his own rightness; here is the very model of a modern statesperson.

Elected to the throne

M. R. D. Foot

TIM GREVE

Norway VII of Norway: Founder of a New Monarchy

Translated and edited by Thomas Kingston Derry
212pp. Hurst. £12.50.
0 95836 66 1

Norway secured a free constitution in 1814, but was subjected to an absentee monarch - the King of Sweden, who seemed to care little for the poorer of his two kingdoms. Oscar II, king from 1872, though crowned in Norway did not choose to revisit it; and realize that the Norwegians meant to break away. In 1905 they did so, after Swedish and Norwegian ministers in a classic secret confrontation at Karlstad - successful because secret - had spent three weeks in hammering out the terms. In a plebiscite, 368,211 Norwegians had just voted for ending the union, and only 184 for maintaining it. The Swedish royal family relinquished all claims to the crown of Norway; whereupon the Norwegian ministers, on their parliament's instructions, offered the crown to Carl, younger son of the crown prince of Denmark. He was a thirty-three-year-old captain in the Danish navy married to his first cousin, Edward VI of England's daughter Maud.

Carl had had forewarning of the offer: indeed his father-in-law had recommended him to go to Norway at once, and present himself as candidate on the spot. Sensibly, the prince indicated that he would only accept if he too was chosen by plebiscite; as he was, on November 12-13, 1905, though by a less overwhelming majority: 259,563 for, 99,264 against. A vote of nearly three to one in his favour was enough, and he became King Haakon VII. He made sure that he always behaved with perfect propriety within the bounds of the constitution. Whenever men of republican leanings could be found prepared to compromise enough with their principles to take office under him, they uniformly found that he was fair and just.

Queen Maud already had a son when they came to the throne, and the boy gained much approval when he took the salute at a march-past at the age of three-and-a-half. The three of them

spoke English together, but the new king threw himself wholeheartedly into the business of becoming Norwegian. (Oddly enough, this admirable life of him does not discuss his feelings about Amundsen's successful dash to the South Pole in December 1911, a Norwegian triumph over the Royal Navy.) His wife never quite mastered the language: having been brought up at Victoria's knee, she found the informality of Norwegian manners surprising. She and her husband had the common sense not to try and retire within a more or less magical court circle. They lived simply - they had neither the money nor the desire to do otherwise. As they grew into their new roles the king, who had read Bagehot, found himself able to advise, to encourage, and to warn.

He welcomed votes for women - Norway was the first country to admit them at parliamentary elections (1907). He helped Norway to stay neutral during the Great War. He

could not lift a finger to save his formerly ruling cousins in Russia from being murdered by Lenin's regime, but he provided a focus round which anti-Bolshevik forces in Norway could rally. When a Labour government, sympathetic to Bolshevism, came to power, its members found to their surprise that he was not the class enemy they had supposed: he was as fair to them as he was to everybody else. He warned his Labour cabinet repeatedly of the need for vigilance against Hitler's Germany, and urged some attention to national defence. One defence minister threatened to resign, sooner than extend the army conscripts' initial training period from ten weeks to twelve.

The king, who had read *Mein Kampf* - as well as his indifferent German word allow, persevered more gloomily, after his wife died in London in 1938. When the next world war began, he helped to hold Norway to a strict neutrality, till on April 9,

1940 - without the shadow of a provocation - Norway and Denmark were attacked by Germany. His Danish brother, Christian X, stayed in Copenhagen to share his people's sufferings under occupation. King Haakon fought his way out from Oslo to the west coast, took ship to Tromsø in the far north, and fought on from there, his grown son beside him. When it was clear that there was no short-term hope of victory, he and his cabinet came out to London on a British cruiser. They never made an armistice, let alone a peace, with Nazi Germany: and four million tons of Norwegian shipping made them the wealthiest of the governments in exile.

The king now became the centre of hope to which Norwegians of every party or none could look for political and military salvation; except for the few who supported Quisling in an effort to welcome the Nazi regime, the handful of Gestapo informers, the slightly larger handful of Norwegian

recruits to the Waffen-SS. The symbol "H 7" - often with the 7 written over the crossbar of the H - appeared all over Norway, on schools, on walls, on lonely trees, in mud, in snow. By frequent broadcasts, and still more frequent interviews with returned adventurers, Haakon kept in close touch with his people, and he and his son were given a rapturous welcome when they returned in June 1945. There was no more talk of a republic. He welcomed Norway's entry into Nato, and faded out quietly thereafter; he died in 1957.

Tim Greve spent many years in the Norwegian foreign service and now edits an Oslo newspaper. He has made excellent use of the Norwegian, Danish and British royal archives and of other unpublished material; and has been splendidly translated by T. K. Derry, who has broadened the text to inform a readership that knows little of Scandinavian history.

With the chic types

Victoria Glendinning

ANITA LESLIE

A Story Half Told: A Wartime Autobiography
220pp. Hutchinson. £9.95.
0 09 15130 7

In this second volume of autobiography the young Anita Leslie goes to war as a driver, leaving the 1930s world of glitter, privilege, and Anglo-Irish eccentricity described in *The Girl and the Gingerbread*. She was sent first to Kenya, then to Egypt, then to Beirut, where she found herself editing an English news-sheet for the troops. The Arab who took down Reuters's bulletins knew no English, nor did the boys who hand-set the copy; she herself drove all over war-torn Lebanon and Syria distributing the paper.

Then, joining the British Red Cross as an ambulance driver, she found herself billeted in the Palace of Caserta, built for the King of Naples, while nearby the battle of Cassino raged. Always wanting to be where the action was, she later got herself

transferred to the French army and was part of an all-gilt ambulance team attached to a tank division pushing up through France and across the Rhine in 1944. These were months of gruelling bloody work - a closed universe of graves, latrines, mud, mutilation and fear. Friends and colleagues were killed; sleep was snatched in the ambulances and perilous forays to pick up the wounded. "This is the world in which I found myself - I who had once been an idiotic debutante."

The erstwhile debutante had friends in high places. General Alexander had been a neighbour in Ireland. Winston Churchill was her cousin. These connections made for strange contrasts. On leave to visit her mother, she visited Churchill at Chequers. "With childish longing in his voice Winston asked what the French thought of him. 'They are like me! They are fond of me?' Yes they were," she could say truthfully. "Within a few hours she was back in Mithras, ready to accompany the tanks forward into Germany. She was regarded as formidable by her French fellow-ambulancers, capable of driving anything so tended to get landed with the worst vehicles, which added to the nightmare. She was in Sigmaringen, across the Rhine, within two hours of the capitulation, 'staying' in the

Hohenzollern castle whence Pétain and Laval had just fled. In Berlin, she entered Hitler's Chancellery - and stole a piece of his headed notepaper to write to her father.

Even though her last job was particularly harrowing - the removal of surviving prisoners from the extermination camp at Nordhausen - and even though, the scenes she describes and the ordeals she survived are horrific in terms of human suffering, there is a great jauntness about this book. Her ambulance team was commanded by a heroine called Jeanne de l'Espée, who insisted that her girls, however gritty the circumstances, should be properly made-up. Morale was sustained with frequent applications of bright red lipstick. "and men did give a gasp of relief when they saw us". In 1983, this particular manifestation of the feminine essence seems funny; then, it seemed important and emblematic.

The tone is unpretentious, and its exclamation-marks are copious. It is as if Angela Brazil had collaborated with Noel Coward. Anita Leslie was conspicuously brave and effective, and she was awarded the Croix de Guerre. Yet she has the frivolity, and the style, of the "chic types" who were "fifteen" in the 1920s. The inner life is not recorded, in this

the book is as its title proclaims "a story half told". The writing is at its best when lingering not on humanity but on nature - the beauty of the Lebanese spring, the glory of skiing in the mountains behind Beirut, or the silver birds' nests she saw in Germany; those resplendent Eurasian birds had intervened anti-radar tinsel dropped by the Allied bombers into the moss and twigs.

What seems to have disturbed her almost as much as the horror and suffering is the evidence she saw of British official bungling. French Resistance workers told her that a pre-arranged coded signal from the BBC was imminent in response; they took action as agreed. But the Resistance was invaded then, and the Resistance men and positions. French prisoners in German hands told her that in response to a similar signal they were sent to concentration camps, where they survived. Men in offices in London never saw the awful results of a "mistake". When the war was said to be over, her colleague Genevieve said: "I wonder if ever again one will be able to distinguish the splendid people from those who are not so splendid? The chic types will not stand out so clearly now." Anita Leslie was, in a chic type.

HENRY DE MONTHERLANT

Romans II
Edited by Michel Raimond
1584pp. Paris: Gallimard. 290fr.
207 0110052

PIERRE SAPIROT

Montherlant sans masque: Tome 1.
L'Enfant prodigue, 1895-1932
500pp. Paris: Laffont. 95fr.
2221010272

The first volume of Pierre Sapirot's two-volume biography *Montherlant sans masque*, which has caused much stir in France, covers the period up to 1932, when Montherlant completed *La Rose de sable*. Since Sapirot has enjoyed the co-operation of Montherlant's literary executor, Jean-Claude Barot, he has had access to the writer's letters and manuscripts, which enables him to reveal some secrets in a life that Montherlant himself sought both to conceal and to reshape.

Sapirot has discovered, for example, that Montherlant was born in 1895 and not in 1896 as stated in the biographical notes to the *Pléiade* edition of his *Œuvres*. In the new *Pléiade Romans II* Michel Raimond, who went through Montherlant's papers with Sapirot, has corrected such mistakes, but it is significant that the *Œuvres* volume was published in 1958, when Montherlant was alive to provide information. Why then should he change the date of his birth? The answer lies in his reputation as a warrior and as the writer who glorified France's sacrifice during the First World War. Born in 1896, Montherlant would not have been called up until 1916 and the *Œuvres* volume's notes duly state that he joined the army in that year. He was supposedly sent to the front the next year and remained there until he was wounded in 1918. In reality Montherlant was a sickly warrior who oscillated between a sensible desire to save his skin and a frantic passion for glory. Called up in 1914, he was rejected for medical reasons. He suffered from heart trouble and, although he could have joined the army as a volunteer, he preferred to wait. Called up again in 1917, he was accepted as an auxiliary and worked for a while as a farm-labourer. By the next year he was eager to get to the front but the trouble was that, although an auxiliary, he could volunteer for combat, he then had to stay at the front. This made no appeal to Montherlant, whose view of the war was summed up by Sapirot: "a few weeks or a few days at the front, a little wound, enough to earn a decoration and then start writing again".

Fortunately, Montherlant's grandmother had relatives who were high-ranking army officers and could be persuaded to help. In the meantime Montherlant bought an elegant uniform and a dagger, told his friends not to expect him back and badgered his grandmother to make sure that his bravery did not go unnoticed. In Paris salons - "Pile it on when you talk to people," he writes, "tell them all about me". In May 1918, he set off for the front, albeit as a non-combatant. He had been there a month when the Germans shelled a training exercise which was taking place a mile behind the French lines. Montherlant was struck by shrapnel and taken to hospital. He bore his painful wound with courage and after his recovery was sent as interpreter to an American regiment, where he listened to lectures on baseball and intrigued to be paid in dollars instead of francs. He had been sufficiently brave to write convincingly about heroism and seen too little of the war to grow disenchanted with it.

In reconstructing Montherlant's escapades, Sapirot relies heavily on the correspondence with his grandmother, but this has brought a legal clash between the biographer and the Gallimard publishing house. Gallimard has asked for Montherlant's escapades, Sapirot relies heavily on the correspondence with his grandmother, but this has brought a legal clash between the biographer and the Gallimard publishing house. Gallimard has asked for Montherlant's escapades, Sapirot relies heavily on the correspondence with his grandmother, but this has brought a legal clash between the biographer and the Gallimard publishing house.

He might, however, have fleshed out his book with more facts and better analysis. Presumably enchanted with his documentation, he relies too heavily on it and, when there are gaps, he does not fill them. One would like to know more about Montherlant's family: his mother who deluged him with flirtatious, ostentatious affection, and his grandfather who prayed for his soul during her pilgrimages to Lourdes but was not in the least shocked by his letters describing his pursuit of young boys. The family was eccentric, impecunious and aristocratic; its sympathies were Catholic and monarchist and it was unreconciled with the republic. Montherlant was proud of his descent and supplied his admirers with genealogical tables to prove that he was an authentic aristocrat. Unfortunately there is doubt about this too, it appears that Montherlant's

replied that Gallimard has itself reproduced in the *Romans II* first drafts and variants which Montherlant certainly did not intend to publish. Since Sapirot had Barot's authorization, the narrow legal question seems to be whether Montherlant's instructions to his publisher should take precedence over the decisions of his literary executor.

But this overlaps with the broader problem of whether Barot, Sapirot and Montherlant's other acquaintances should make known the full story of his life. Although this is an issue raised by almost every biography, it is particularly acute in Montherlant's case. He battled to impose an image of himself as the man who loved independence, honour and virility and to hide from the public anything that might be construed as a personal weakness. Some of his friends feel that his wishes should be respected and one of them, Philippe de Saint Robert, has written recently in *Historie* that "Montherlant would feel nothing but scorn and disgust for those who, knowing or guessing some of his most profound secrets, are now prepared to cast them before the public." This onslaught seems to be directed at Sapirot and Roger Peyrefitte, but Montherlant's attitude might have been more ambiguous. He did, after all, encourage Sapirot to become his biographer. Did he fail to realize that any conscientious biographer would check his author's birth-date and then wonder why it had been falsified? Did he imagine that the fact of his pederasty, which was by the end of his life no secret in the gossip literary world of Paris, could be suppressed?

For those of us who still believe that the story of a man's life can help us to understand his writing, the story that Sapirot tells is both more useful and more convincing than the story Montherlant himself tried to tell. Montherlant's mature novels are populated by characters whose inner lives are very different from their official beliefs. There is a colonial officer who loses his belief in colonialism and an artist who is uninterested in painting (*La Rose de sable*); there is a priest to whom God is an illusion (*Les Garçons*); and an anarchist who has never believed in anarchy (*Le Chaos et la nuit*). Montherlant's narrative technique consists of contrasting one character with another and each fleeing emotion with the next. The relentless depiction of such psychological disintegration is far easier to understand if it is the work of an author who carefully constructed his public image while knowing that his real life was more complex.

This does not mean that Montherlant's mask was false. He believed passionately in the values he advocated and he tried to live up to them by insisting on going to the front in 1918, by participating in bullfights and athletics and by repeatedly asserting his independence. So it is incumbent on the biographer to convey this mixture of strength and weakness. Roger Peyrefitte's portrait of Montherlant in *Propos secrets* (1977) is a cruel caricature because, even if the details of Montherlant's pederasty are correct, he was not merely a man who hung around amusement-arades in order to pick-up young boys. Sapirot's biography is balanced and he does not indulge in such denigration.

He might, however, have fleshed out his book with more facts and better analysis. Presumably enchanted with his documentation, he relies too heavily on it and, when there are gaps, he does not fill them. One would like to know more about Montherlant's family: his mother who deluged him with flirtatious, ostentatious affection, and his grandfather who prayed for his soul during her pilgrimages to Lourdes but was not in the least shocked by his letters describing his pursuit of young boys. The family was eccentric, impecunious and aristocratic; its sympathies were Catholic and monarchist and it was unreconciled with the republic. Montherlant was proud of his descent and supplied his admirers with genealogical tables to prove that he was an authentic aristocrat. Unfortunately there is doubt about this too, it appears that Montherlant's

The bard of heroism

Patrick McCarthy

family was at best very minor nobility. Sapirot might have made more effort to analyse this milieu because it is surely significant that Montherlant, whose work both exalts and subverts the values of the French right, came from the fringes of good society.

For the decisive event in Montherlant's life - an affair with another boy which resulted in his expulsion from the Catholic boarding-school of Sainte-Croix in 1912 - Sapirot relies on the fictional account which Montherlant gives in *Les Garçons*. It may be that there are no other sources, but a novel written and rewritten during most of Montherlant's life and not published in full until after his death is not a satisfactory document in a biography. Sapirot is also curiously uninterested in literary history and he has little to say about Montherlant's dealings with his schoolmate François Mauriac and with writers like Paul Morand and Drieu la Rochelle with whom he might be compared.

After he was demobilized Montherlant published his first books - the essays *La Relève du matin* (1920) and the novel *Le Songe* (1922) - which established his reputation as the bard of heroism. In these books old women throw flowers at the men leaving for the front, chaplains speak of Jesus bringing the sword and not peace, and the soldiers are caught up in the exaltation of fraternity. Not that Montherlant omits the horror of war; rather he lyricizes it. Absent is any sense of the squalor and monotony of the trenches: the lice, the dirt and the banality of death. In *Le Songe* Montherlant depicts a hospital full of soldiers who are waiting to die; their gaping wounds are terrifying but terror becomes sublime as Montherlant writes of their infinite nobility and their half-released souls hovering over their bodies.

In 1924 Montherlant published the most curious of his early works, *Les Olympiques*. A book of sketches and poems about athletics, boxing and soccer, it expresses his belief that sport is a kind of war. Inevitably *Les Olympiques* contains purple passages, such as the depiction of a woman runner whose knee is grazed and whose blood mingles mystically with that shed at the Marne. Far more intriguing is Montherlant's sense of the athlete's precision. Like the ballet-dancer, the soccer-player knows where and how to move and without ever thinking, understands the totality of the game. This corporeal intelligence fascinates Montherlant, who spent long afternoons at the soccer stadiums in the Paris suburbs.

The next year he abandoned Paris and began to spend most of his time travelling. He gave up his family's house at Neuilly, took a flat on the rue de Bourgogne, which he never furnished, and set off for Spain and North Africa. He wished to break - at least partially - with his success and his reputation as a right-wing writer. Following in the footsteps of Glide and the early Barrès, he was preserving his freedom and shunning dogmas in favour of "disponibilité". In 1928 he took a flat in Algiers, travelling often to Morocco and south into the desert. He was attracted by the Mediterranean, by Islam and by Arab boys. During this period his writing began to change: *La Rose de sable* is more ironic and less subjective than his earlier novels.

One reason why Montherlant turned his back on Paris in 1925 was the conflict between his homosexuality and his reputation. In North Africa opportunity was greater and police surveillance less strict. For Montherlant was determined both to live and to hide his pederasty. He avoided all forms of dress and behaviour that would hint at the truth and, when he accompanied Glide around Algiers, he was shocked that Glide did not show similar restraint (in practice he seems to have been a more active pederast than Glide). It is hard to avoid thinking that Glide's decision to avow his homosexuality was more useful for him and everyone else than Montherlant's determination to conceal his. But Montherlant had no desire to be useful. Instead of writing a *Corydon* he hid his sexuality in his books and even

in *Les Garçons* explicitly sexual activity takes place only between adolescents. The relationship between the abbé de Pradts and the boys is platonic; the hero, Alban, turns to women when he leaves school and his friend Linsbourg, who does not, is conveniently killed off in the trenches.

Once he settled in North Africa, Montherlant grew steadily more critical of French colonialism and this becomes one of the themes of *La Rose de sable*. But when he finished that novel and returned to Paris in 1932 he decided not to publish it - *La Rose* did not appear until 1967. This caused controversy because Montherlant was accused of shirking his duty as a writer by waiting until the colonial issue was safely resolved before publishing a book that would have opened the eyes of the public to the injustice of French rule. In reply Montherlant asserted that in 1932 he had returned to "find France weak and divided in the face of a fascist party and a Nazi party." When asked why he had not published *La Rose* during the Algerian war he answered that it was not needed, because "the French government had decided in 1955 to give up North Africa to the Moslems".

This second answer is silly because the decision to abandon Algeria was not taken until some time after De Gaulle's return to power in 1958. The first answer is more convincing and Sapirot is probably too sceptical of it. It was, after all, in the elections of July 1932 that the Nazis became the largest party in the Reichstag. However, another reason for not publishing the novel was that it would have been a betrayal less of France than of the public Montherlant had won with *La Relève*. It would have been an outright act of defiance by a writer who preferred to undermine from within. Meanwhile the decision not to publish was an act of aristocratic disdain towards his career and even towards his work - in *La Rose* Guiscart, the painter, deliberately mutilates one of his best drawings.

Sapirot's biography stops at this point but *La Rose de sable* is the first novel in *Romans II*, the others being *Les Garçons*, *Le Chaos et la nuit* and *Un Assassin est mon maître*. Although the political theme of *La Rose* seems less original to readers who have in the meantime read Albert Memmi, it remains both an excellent study of the colonialist mentality and a fine psychological novel. Auligny is a soldier who has never dreamed that "one can be an honest man without being a Catholic and a nationalist" and who considers the colonial officer as "a sort of saint". Then he has an affair with an Arab girl and begins to waver. Colonialism differently. However, he is soon overwhelmed by contradictions which Montherlant paints with ironic glee. Auligny wants to believe in Arab pride but the Arabs in his oasis are obsequious and, when they do disobey him, he is shocked. He rebukes the French soldiers for treating the Arabs harshly but, when

he hears Arabs criticize them, rushes to their defence. Alienated from the colonizer he finds no solace among the colonized, and his Arab girlfriend treats him with maddening indifference. Auligny feigns illness to be sent home from a country he has come to hate but he is killed during an Arab riot in Bez where, instead of fleeing like Guiscart, he makes a futile plea for fraternity.

Montherlant well understood what Memmi was to call the "impossibility" of colonialism. Yet he cannot envisage revolt or independence, which explains why Auligny's story is framed by the portrait of Guiscart, who now sympathizes with the Arabs and now spurns them and is pleased rather than troubled by such contradictions.

Les Garçons is an unusual and important novel: important because it is the fictional version of the affair with "Serge" which shaped Montherlant's life and unusual because it is curiously serene rather than ironic and because it is so clearly the account of an obsession. For 400 pages Montherlant depicts almost nothing except the frenzied love-affairs among the adolescents of Sainte-Croix. The abundant detail reveals how often he must have relived these short months: he remembers Serge's sailor-suits, the liqueur they ate together, the way Serge's hair was cut, their kisses and Serge's acne. Never have the neck, knees and ankles of young boys been described with such amorous attention. The entire school throbs with desire as the pupils engage in intrigues and infidelities, while parents encourage, teachers connive and no precious time is wasted on study. Montherlant is certain that the reality of this desire will not disintegrate and indeed there are two extraordinary episodes where it is portrayed as giving meaning to life. The first is the Easter mass, which is a heady brew of incense, angelic twelve-year-old altar boys and sweating sixteen-year-olds who eye them up. It seems impossible to depict this without irony and yet Montherlant clearly wants us to believe that adolescent desire, and religious experience are fused. The second episode is the death of the abbé de Pradts, the priest who does not believe in God. In his last moments he is converted by the memory of all the boys he has loved and he dies calmly and happily.

Le Chaos et la nuit (1963) is more characteristic: the portrait of a Spanish anarchist who lives by a code of honour and loyalty to the republic but whose Civil War heroism was chiefly a love of violence and whose loyalty has long since turned into sterility. Like the other novels in this volume it will surely last. During his old age Montherlant indulged in foolish lamentations about the decline of Europe and worried that after his death no one would read him. But Montherlant "the prophet of decadence" is just another mask; whereas a novel like *Les Garçons* has a very real fascination.

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CEDRIC H. WHITMAN

The Heroic Paradox: Essay on Homer, Sophocles, and Aristophanes. Edited by Charles Segal. 171pp. Cornell University Press. £14. 0 8014 1433 9

ALBERT MACHIN

Cohérence et continuité dans le théâtre de Sophocle. 239pp. Québec: Serge Fleury. 2 89195 001 1

Cedric Whitman taught at Harvard from 1947 until his death in 1979. *The Heroic Paradox* contains six essays about the authors to whom he devoted full-length books, Sophocles (1951), Homer (1958) and Aristophanes (1964). The essays show him at his best, and would give a reader acquainted with his other work a good notion of his general character.

Whitman was a modest man, who regarded himself as "a classical humanist, not as a professional expert on the classics". Charles P. Segal in his introduction rightly says that he "lived very much in the culture of his time". He wrote poetry himself, and was widely read in modern literature; and he had the great merit of realizing from the start of his career that the intellectual climate created by the work of Nietzsche and Kierkegaard had strong affinities with that of early Greece. From the first his sympathy with modern existentialism made him sympathetic also to the Greek notion of heroism.

In his first book, *Sophocles: A Study in Heroic Humanism*, which E. R. Dodds called "vigorous but sometimes perverse", Whitman saw the action of the dramas largely from the viewpoint of their heroic characters. To the Sophoclean gods he was less indulgent; "in the light of the dramas themselves", he wrote, "it is impossible that Sophocles' innermost allegiance can have been to the official gods of Olympus". The best chapter of *Homer and the Heroic Tradition* contains a fine study of the Homeric Achilles. Whitman thought that Milman Parry had proved Homer to have been an oral poet, and had been persuaded by Albert Lord that Serbo-Croatian poetry offered a precious key to the solution of Homeric problems; but he was immune against the modern theories of the primitive inadequacy of Homeric ethics that have prevented so many modern scholars from doing justice to the central subject of the *Iliad*. *Aristophanes and the Comic Hero* contains some of Whitman's liveliest writing; but the metaphysics of heroism do not provide an ideal standpoint for a study of Aristophanes, and the book is less successful than its predecessors.

The first essay in the new book gives a useful summary of Whitman's attitude to Greek heroism, showing both its strength and its weakness; the second essay, "Existentialism and the Tragic Hero", which is the most interesting in the book, usefully complements it. Like Nietzsche, Whitman feels that Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy is not well equipped to explain the nature of tragedy, as approaches being ethical rather than metaphysical. Modern existentialism results either from loss of belief in the divine or from loss of belief that the divine power operates in the world as it has traditionally been supposed to do. But the Greek hero operated in the world governed by gods, gods, indeed, so unlike the Christian deity that the believer did not owe them "innermost allegiance", as a Christian might, but by no means so remote from men as the god of these existentialists. Who, retain belief in the deity, in the application of existentialist categories to tragedy, Whitman seems to me to take insufficient account of this vital difference. For example, when Ajax has failed in his attempt to murder the Greek commanders through the madness sent upon him by Athena, he escapes from his desperate situation by suicide. "Essential nature", Whitman writes, "seeks a positive act in which to vindicate itself permanently and

undeniably as being"; by suicide, Ajax removes himself from the world of existence, permeated by time, into the timeless world. A Greek might have said more simply that Ajax chooses the only way left to him of salvaging his honour in the sight of gods and men. Oedipus' self-blinding, Whitman says, is "a freely offered token of the moral integrity he wills in contrast to the circumstances that have overwhelmed him". But is the audience really meant to feel that Oedipus has done well to blind himself, or that he or anyone else is better off as a result?

Whitman firmly believed in Homer and in the unity of the *Iliad*, but his Homer moved within the bounds imposed by Lord's notion of what was possible for an oral poet, bounds made narrow by all the limitations of the Serbo-Croatian epic material. Whitman's essay on anomalies in the *Iliad* is admirable for its refusal to turn, as did many of his contemporaries, to the theory of multiple authorship as an explanation of all problems. But his attempt to show what was distinctive to Homer by finding subtle variations upon standard themes and their associations does not always persuade; he might have been happier if he had been free to believe in a poet liberated by the advent of writing to use a poetic tradition that had begun by being oral for new and remarkable effects.

In his essay "Antigone and the Nature of Nature", he presents Antigone as the champion of nature (*physis*) in the famous fifth-century discussion of the relation between nature and convention (*nomos*). His point is a good one; but here, as in his book on Sophocles, he seems insufficiently aware of the drawbacks corresponding to the heroine's heroic qualities. Like his book on Aristophanes, the essay "Aristophanes and the City" does not show Whitman at his best; sensitivity to the feeling termed in modern times "alienation" does not seem especially characteristic of this poet.

To adopt a phrase coined by R. P. Winnington-Ingram, "Whitman in his work on Sophocles is a 'hero-worshipper' rather than a 'pictist'"; the former term denotes those who find that the poet sympathizes completely with the heroes as they defy unjust or indifferent gods, the latter those who believe that he maintains belief in the justice with which the gods rule the universe. Another "hero-worshipper" is Albert Machin, who sets out to examine the charges of incoherence and lack of continuity brought against Sophocles by certain modern scholars, notably by Tycho von Wilmowitz in his famous book of 1917. Machin tries to show that alleged breaches of coherence or continuity result always from the poet's wish to preserve a different kind of consistency, one displayed in the presentation of the principal character, sometimes called the "hero". He believes that the poet is especially concerned with the relation of that character to the gods; and with what he calls that character's "moral authority".

Aristotle, Machin reminds us, says that a tragedy should have "sufficient amplitude to allow a probable or necessary succession of particular actions to produce a change from bad to good or from good to bad fortune". In three of the seven complete plays, the *Trachiniae*, the *Antigone*, and the *Oedipus Tyrannus*, the change, Machin explains, is from good to bad; the remaining four, the *Ajax*, the *Electra*, the *Philoctetes*, and the *Oedipus at Colonus*, it is from bad to good. Machin seems to take it for granted that each play has a hero, in the sense of a principal character around whom the action revolves and with whom the audience is meant to sympathize. John Jones in 1962 showed that the widespread belief that Aristotle says that each tragedy must have a hero in this sense depends on a misunderstanding. Aristotle does say, and says truly, that a play depicts an action; and that the characters are there for the action, and not the action for the characters. Thus there is little point in arguing as to who is the central character of the *Trachiniae*, for the play depicts an action, the central character of the *Antigone*, for that play depicts an action, the burial of Polyneices. To speak of a hero in the

sense of a central character is doubly misleading, for it is true that each of the plays contains at least one character who is of heroic stature, and the poet is much occupied with the distinction between those who are heroes in this sense and ordinary mortals. A hero in this sense is not necessarily morally superior to other persons; thus the Heracles of the *Trachiniae*, while eminently heroic, is not morally admirable. Indeed, from the point of view of ethics not one of Sophocles' heroic figures is irreproachable. Ajax attempts the murder of the Greek commanders, whatever the provocation surely a criminal action; Antigone, the first Oedipus and Electra, despite their noble and splendid qualities, are proud and intractable to a fault, being contrasted in both respects with their folk, Ismene, Creon and Chrysothemis; the aged Oedipus, who appears so sympathetic in his defence of his essential innocence and in his relations with Theseus and the Athenians, hates his sons no less than he loves his daughters and by his curses upon his sons will cause the death of all his children. All this is lost on Machin, who concentrates his whole attention on the development of the "hero's" relationship with the gods and on the growth or waning of his "moral authority".

In the *Ajax*, Machin has eyes only for the rehabilitation of the hero, who seems to him justified in every action. At the start, he believes, we are led to think that the award of the arms of Achilles to Odysseus may have been just; at the end we learn that it is unjust. The arms are awarded to Odysseus by a board of judges, just according to the Atreidae, unjust

according to Ajax and Teucer. Was anyone who believed Odysseus to have had even greater military value than Ajax necessarily unjust? Ajax is great, as Odysseus generously acknowledges, but even after his rehabilitation, can we not see his faults as well as his great qualities? A tragedy is not a biography, but the depiction of an action, and the action usually presents a clash between incompatibles, not to be resolved or done away with by any facile solution.

Electra for Machin is always in the right; he fails to notice that she herself admits that she has become something like a monster, and blames her mother for it. He also fails to notice that the poet is not impervious to the horror of the matricide and the part Electra plays in it ("strike a double blow, if you have the strength"), and misses the significance of the final scene, with its implication that the misfortunes of the house of Atreus are not at an end.

Machin's insistence on the growing "moral authority" of Philoctetes blinds him to his heroic stubbornness, and he finds fault with Neoptolemus for wishing Philoctetes to go to Troy after the return of the bow. Surely Philoctetes' refusal is magnificent but impossible; Odysseus has more to be said for him than Machin sees.

Like Philoctetes, the aged Oedipus is said all the time to be gaining in moral authority, and is always justified; the clear hint that his persistence in his curse will cause the deaths of his daughters as well as of his sons is not taken.

Now we come to the three plays in which Machin thinks the fortune of the hero changes from good to bad, and in which the hero's moral authority

declines. The *Trachiniae* ends for him in unrelieved gloom; he misses the delicate allusion to the coming apotheosis, admirably explained by Patricia Easterling in her recent commentary. In the *Antigone* and *Tyrrhenus* Machin's rigid adherence to his method leads him to redirect attention to two real problems, so that what he has to say about these two plays is less uninteresting than the remainder of his book. Antigone, he remarks, gives different reasons for her burial of her brother at different times, and though she has declared that she is glad to die, in her last moments she laments for her prospective death. Since Antigone has to be losing moral authority, Machin will have it that in her last moments her courage fails her; with the insensitivity that pervades his work he contrives not to see that, though in the most human way the heroine laments the loss of her marriage and her youth, she never for a moment loses courage.

The first Oedipus also has to be losing authority, and this leads Machin to dispute the generally accepted view that Oedipus demonstrates his heroism by his persistence in the inquiry that finally reveals his own patricide and incest. Oedipus persists, he argues, because he has still some hope, and he finds fault with him and with locate for their scepticism about oracles, inhuman rejoicing at the death of Oedipus' supposed father and unwillingness to the loyal Theban shepherd. The view that Machin calls in question has been so long generally received that it is good to be obliged to reconsider it; but if we do so we are forced to the conclusion that it is correct. So here also Machin is mistaken.

rhetician, some freshly minted, may well have found no place in Horace's vocabulary. Yet this failure to come to grips with Cairns's arguments and the counter-arguments of his opponents is unhelpful in a book about genre. Johnson's proposals for new generic arrangements are seldom successful. I cannot see the usefulness of terming Ben Jonson's *To Penshurst* (which the poet as "choreographer" speaks for *communitas*); it would have been more valuable to investigate its real links, with Martial's epigrams, with Horace's second *Epode*, observing that in a manner it is closer to *sermo* than to *lyric*. Within this hold-all category of "choral" are then included the *Georgics*, *Leaves of Grass*, Rilke's *Sonnets to Orpheus*, *Four Quartets* and much else.

Johnson shows inadequate historical sense. The portrait of Callimachus of world is near to fantasy, at times amusingly reminiscent of that of more recent librarian-poets. This defect is compounded by the fact that Johnson almost never gives us the Latin or Greek (plus *crito*), but only modern verse versions (for example Peter Whigham in *Imagist style for Molester and Catullus*) that speak all too sadly only of the late twentieth century. Even in the fairly close rendering of Sappho's most famous fragment (no 31) by Rosemeyer there are several serious distortions ("silver laughter" for "lovely laughter", "my skin like color of grass" for "I am greener than grass") that make it difficult for a proper encounter with Sappho to take place.

"While verse was giving way to prose and faith was giving way to reason, Pindar was becoming Orpheus" - that is Johnson's sort of history. But of real literary history - for example the opposition between Pindar and Horace as rival lyric models from the Renaissance onwards - he has little to say. Johnson's preoccupation with "universals" keeps him from seeing that one of the profits of reading the poetry of the past is precisely to see with other eyes, to encounter alien ways of life, experiences, emotions. In short this is an expensive book, not least because it comes from an author so gifted and humane. It contains good things (a couple of excellent papers on Yeats, for example, and on Seneca and Elizabethan tragedy), but as a contribution to our understanding of the genre it is gravely defective.



A costume design for an Arab dancer, possibly in d'Annunzio's *La Pisanella*, by Léon Bakst (1913); an item to be sold at Christie's on June 29.

Strange encounter

Peter Kemp

STEPHEN MACDONALD

Not About Heroes
Radio 4

Not About Heroes, Stephen Macdonald's radio dramatization of the friendship between Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen, included a scene where the two men co-operated to complete "Anthem for Doomed Youth". It was Sassoon, this episode displayed, who came up with the word "Anthem" for the title. What was made clear was why Owen pounced so eagerly upon the suggestion - surely because anthems rely on antiphony, as does his poem, which counterpoints plangency with discord. The play might have been expected to register this in that its own technique was extremely antiphonal. Originally written for the stage, it came into its own on radio, where there was nothing to distract from its artful interweaving of two personal and poetic voices.

As Sassoon, Stephen Macdonald struck an authentic-sounding note of diffident arrogance and defensive bluntness: off-handedness subtly strained to hold troubling emotions at arm's length. James Telfer as Owen - socially and artistically far less established when the two first met - convincingly veered between slightly swaggered shyness and effusion. Not surprisingly, he failed to achieve quite the rich verbal texture Sassoon colourfully attributed to Owen in his reminiscences - a "velvety voice" that "suggested grimaces and sumptuous 'browns'". But for all that, his renderings of the poetry were exemplary - alert, responsive and intelligent.

The challenge Macdonald faced with his play was in contriving dialogue that sounded faithful to written sources while also seeming true to life. This wasn't achieved. His handling of the men's joint work in drafting "Anthem for Doomed Youth" for example, was so speeded up as to leave little room for the two poets to be working closely together, with Sassoon typically barking out suggestions as if he were helping Owen to finish a crossword puzzle. "Try monstrous 'browns' - 'For' not 'To'." This business-like rapidity seemed a

misfiring device for warding off the preciousness Macdonald obviously feared may lie in wait for a play about poets and poetry. Paraphrasing pretentiousness was emphatically gilded in the opening scene between Sassoon and Owen, where the inflated absurdity of a book of verse they'd found - "O is it true I have become? This gourd, this gothic vacuum?" - left them convulsed with laughter.

Mainly set in Craiglockhart War Hospital - a sort of no man's land between the military and the civilian - the play focused on the factors impelling Sassoon and Owen not only to write but also to fight. As regards the latter, an unusual emphasis was placed on something Robert Graves affirmed of Owen in *Goodbye to All That*: "It preyed on his mind that he had been unjustly accused of cowardice by his commanding officer." Misleadingly, Sassoon was presented as being keenly aware of this. But, in fact, he sent a furious letter to Graves, demanding of the claim concerning Owen, "What is your authority for laying so much stress . . . on the 'cowardice' story?" and declaring, "I saw him every day for about 3 months and can assure you that he . . . said so little about being accused of 'cold feet' that I always regarded it as a negligible affair, and had no recollection of it until it was climaxed by Scott-Moncrieff in an article on O's poems."

The play was weakest in its psychological speculations - especially when trying to establish tremors of homosexual rapport between Owen and Sassoon. Portentous pauses indicated that, behind pursed lips, the love that dare not speak its name was at any rate plucking up the courage to announce that it was in the vicinity. As Owen prepared to leave Craiglockhart, dialogue of a peculiarly clipped and clenched intensity - "You'll miss your train." "Yes." "You must." "Go . . . goodbye." - brought the play closer to the now - brought the play closer to the world of *Brief Encounter* than that of "Strange Meeting".

When dealing with the artistic interplay between the two men - and the way mass destruction goaded them into individual creativity - the play was far surer. "Conscience homes seem to breed poets", Robert Graves once wrote. At Craiglockhart, with Sassoon and Owen, the play conscientiously demonstrated, this was because the talent of the one fertilized the genius of the other.

commentary

From whimsy to harmony

Briony Llewellyn

The Islamic Perspective: An Aspect of British Architecture and Design in the Nineteenth Century. Leighton House

The harmonious design and sumptuous colour of buildings such as the Alhambra at Granada and the great mosques of Istanbul and Cairo held a particular appeal for the British, and it is the nature of that appeal and the extent to which it permeated British architecture and design in the nineteenth century that are explored in the current exhibition at Leighton House, which runs until July 25. Two quotations from the excellent exhibition catalogue by Michael Darby (166pp. Scorpion Communications. 377 High Street, Stratford, London E15 2J. 0 900033 31 3) serve to point the contrast between the attitudes towards Islamic forms prevailing up to the end of the eighteenth century, and those of approximately a century later. "Twas all whimsical and charming", wrote Lady Mary Wortley Montagu early in the eighteenth century about her life in Constantinople as wife to the Ambassador to the Sublime Porte. Her response is reflected in Henry Keene's eighteenth-century design for a tent, one of many such "Turkish" ornaments, more rococo than Islamic in feeling. By the second half of the nineteenth century, however, the architect Matthew Digby Wyatt could write confidently on "Orientalism in

European Industry" stating that "we work now in almost all departments of production, especially in carpets, rugs, tiles, floor-cloth, mural decoration, paper hangings, shawls and to some extent in jewellery and mosaics, in the spirit if not in the forms of Oriental art". But, as Wyatt hints, the influence was not a matter simply of copying Islamic forms verbatim, but of absorbing something of the spirit of Islamic design and recreating it in another idiom.

The figure who perhaps contributed most to this acceptance of Islamic art was Owen Jones, and his work is well represented here. Through both his theories and his practice Jones gave wider currency to the Islamic style in Britain, on a popular level by means of his designs for books, tiles, wall-papers and much else, as well as within the narrower confines of academic aesthetics. Until the early nineteenth century "Turkish" elements had often been grafted on to western forms or else chosen for their picturesque value alone. In the 1820s and 1830s, by contrast, Owen Jones and his contemporaries - Joseph Bonomi, James Wild and others - examined and recorded Islamic architecture on the spot for its own sake. Detailed studies of an ornamented section of a building, as in examples by Jones, or by the Frenchman Charles Texier (much admired in Britain), or general views of a mosque or house in its context by artists such as William Bartlett or Thomas Allom, show that it was colour and its place in the elaborate decorative schemes, which most interested them. The central section of

the exhibition shows how architects and designers interpreted these factual observations.

Jones carried the recreation of the Islamic experience further than any of his contemporaries. At first he was successful only with his designs for books and tiles, but through his work on the interior of the Crystal Palace for the Great Exhibition of 1851 he came to realize that it was the principles underlying Islamic ornament rather than the forms themselves that held the key to the future development of his "new" style. An example of how he translated these theories is his splendid watercolour of the interior of the Oxford Street Gallery of the glass manufacturers, Osler's - sadly, now demolished. At the same time, in the *Grammar of Ornament*, 1856, Jones published his principles in which "fitness", "harmony" and "proportion" resulting in "repose" were the guiding forces.

Jones's interpretation of Islamic principles certainly affected later decorative designers, notably Christopher Dresser. On the other hand, few, if any, of the numerous oriental interiors and exteriors of the later nineteenth century adhered to those principles: the few examples displayed, including George Aitchison's design for the Arab Hall in Leighton House itself, suggest an accumulation of Islamic and other sources not subjected to the refining process of Jones's discipline, and are curiosities rather than part of the mainstream of British nineteenth-century design.

The children's progress

Rosemary Ashton

Sister Streams

Old Red Lion, Islington

Behind *Sister Streams* lies an interesting idea. Take Wordsworth, Dorothy, the Hutchinson sisters Mary and Sara, Coleridge and De Quincey, their neighbour and soul-fellow in the Lakes. Exercising poetic licence with chronology, settle on two years, 1789 for historical and political reasons and 1802 because in that year Wordsworth and Mary were married, and have your three young men and three young women interact by means of gesture and a series of quotations from their letters, journals and autobiographical writings. The result might be a suggestive and entertaining study of the intensity with which Romantic poets and their helpmates lived their lives, moment by moment. This is how it might have been, but despite the obvious commitment and professionalism of the company, Bulck of Signs, and the sympathy and eye for detail of their director, Simon Usher, *Sister Streams* fails to exploit fully the possibilities inherent in its subject.

Those who are familiar with the details of Romantic life in the Lakes can take pleasure in recognizing such gobblets from the Romantics' writings as the extracts from Dorothy's *Grasmere Journal* that Coleridge first wrote in letter form to Sara Hutchinson ("Aunt"). De Quincey's remarks about little "Kate Wordsworth's" death; Coleridge's delighted observations on the physical and linguistic progress of his children Hartley and Derwent. Likewise, the knowing spectator supplies the context for the many gestural "scenes": the dropping of boiling water on Coleridge's foot which gave the occasion for "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison"; the stealing of

birds' eggs (borrowed from *The Prelude* and extended to all six characters acting joyfully and guiltily together); skating; De Quincey dunking his head in a bowl of cold water to relieve his toothache, or, during his escape from Manchester Grammar School, dropping his trunk outside the headmaster's door, roaring with nervous laughter, yet failing to wake the headmaster, known to be a very light sleeper. The unknown spectator, though perhaps able to enjoy the spectacle of such mimics, must wonder what it all adds up to.

In fact, it adds up to rather little. This piece has no architectonic character. There seems to be no reason why precisely these episodes are chosen rather than any other. Though I am sure that Simon Usher and his actors know and feel with the historical characters they play, the distracting episodic nature of the piece might as well have been the result of their opening a few key texts at random. This is probably intentional. The point, I take it, is to show how the Romantics lived on a specially acute level of sensibility. Routine daily activities like

ironing sheets, taking tea, or looking at the progress of flowers in the garden drew from all of them - particularly Dorothy, whose journals are the primary text here - earnest and reverent observations. Perceiving the wonderful in the familiar was for Wordsworth and Coleridge a manifesto for life and art (see *Lyrical Ballads*). However, this production, though earnest, suggested merely the oddity of this notion.

What the piece does best - though again one has to be "in the know" to appreciate it - is to turn the six young adults into precocious children experiencing everything as an experiment, living through the primary childhood senses of taste and touch. Thus there is much groping, sucking, banging, crying and giggling. The Romantics were obsessed with childhood, and all six of those portrayed here were orphaned or semi-orphaned as children. Knowing this, one sees the point of relating their poetic sensibilities directly by gesture to their (missed) childhoods. Some method ought to have been found of making it clear to the whole audience.

MRS
OSCAR
WILDE

A Woman of
Some Importance
Anne
Clark Amor

The story of Oscar Wilde's rise and fall is well known. Yet the even more tragic story of Constance Wilde, his talented, intelligent but finally abandoned wife, is scarcely ever told. Anne Clark Amor, author of *The Real Alice*, had full access to Oscar Wilde's private papers, and has written a compassionate and compelling biography.

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City-cent

Words by Craig Raine Music by Nigel Osborne

♩ = c. 108
1st Volta

voice
2nd Volta

guitar

On my desk, a set of la-bels,
In- stead of of- fice work,
or a syn- op- sis of books,
blanched by the sun and trail- ing their
I fish for com- pte- meals and sport a pen- cil le-
rooks like a wa- tering can. Be- yond and be- low, di- mi- nished by dis- tance,
- hind each car, a bit of a de- vil, or trap the le-
a la- xi sit- uers of the lights: a shin- ing mar- hen with an o- range no- die sit
to pho- nos over- head by an- der my chin. The Ri- chard Crook- back cry- ing, A horse! A horse! My

On my desk, a set of labels
or a synopsis of books,
blanched by the sun
and trailing their roots
like a watering can.

Beyond and below,
diminished by distance,
a text the verbal lights.

a shining moorhen
with an orange nodule
set over the beak,
taking a passenger

under its wing
I turn a way, composing
the cuckoo's cry
at bay in the distance.

and eavesdrop (bless you!)
on the hay-fever of trucks.
My caran d'ache are sharp
as the tips of an iris

and the four-hor file
is spotted with rust:
a study of places
by a Japanese master.

poco rall. a tempo!

o-ver the book, ta-king a pas- sen- ger un- der its wing. I turn a- way, con- front the
King- dom for a horse! but on- ly to my- self, to mi- rally the tube is se- mi-
poco rall. poco meno mosso
cuc- hold hat- stand at bay in the car- ner, and eaves- drop (bless you!) on the hay- fe- ver of trucks.
stiff with shut- it- up wings, the Mar- ca- des has wind- screen wi- pers like a bird's broken tongue,
My ca- ran d'ache are sharp as the tips of an i- ris and the four- hor file is spot- ted with rust:
and I am per- fect- ly hap- py to see your head, quick round the door dry- ad, as I pre- tend to be O- vid in
study of places by a Ja- pan- ese mas- ter, o- chur ex- qui- site- ly blad.
ex- ite, com- pas- ing Trai- tie and sad for the shin- ing, the mis- sed, the mar- cu- lar beach.

and eavesdrop (bless you!)
on the hay-fever of trucks.
I turn a way, composing
the cuckoo's cry
at bay in the distance.

and the four-hor file
is spotted with rust:
a study of places
by a Japanese master.

like Richard Crookback
crying, A horse! A horse!
My kingdom for a horse!
but only to myself.

ironically: the tube
is semi-stiff with stallion wings,
the chairman's Mercedes
has windscreen wipers

like a bird's broken tongue,
and I am perfectly happy
to see your head, quick
round the door like a dried,

as I pretend to be Ovid
in exile, composing *Tristia*
and sad for the shining,
the missed, the muscular beach.

Viewpoint: the recovery of Hebrew

Lewis Glinert

Recently I had the uncommon experience of arbitrating between a neighbourhood priest and a local radical Labour lady. The topic of their dispute was Hebrew: he argued that it was a deceased tongue, once intoned by the Sons of the Prophets and now preserved as a sort of Jewish Latin; she - having worked on a (suitably Titoist) kibbutz - that it has always been the language of Middle Eastern Jews ("you know, the ones that really belong there") and had presumably been heard in that part of the world since Amos first demonstrated against the landed Israelite elite.

The truth is that Hebrew is the only recorded case of a language being born again from the pages of books. This has happened within living memory, and can be explained only in terms of a most singular national will. One hundred years ago, no one spoke Hebrew. The vast majority of Jews did indeed speak a Jewish mother-tongue, but this was Yiddish (for most European Jews), Judeo-Spanish (for various other "Judaized" languages). (By 1935 Yiddish numbered over ten million speakers, making it one of the leading "literate" languages of that time.) When a Jew wrote a letter or read a story, it was ordinarily in Yiddish - so too were the sermons he heard and even the religious schooling he received. Hebrew was for him (and for her - to the small extent that Jewish women were given academic instruction) the language of the "Sources": the Bible, prayers, codes of Jewish observance - and, for the erudite, philosophy, poetry and so on. As an observant Jew (and most were still observant), one works so that one might study; and life was a translation: one studied and prayed in Hebrew, and had it all explained to one in Yiddish.

No one spoke Hebrew, yet educated Jews, of whom there were many, could speak it, and occasionally did: when a Yiddish-speaking Jew conversed with one who talked Judeo-Arabic, as happened daily in the Holy Land throughout the centuries, the two could easily get by in Hebrew. Hebrew had in fact been vital to the critical economic and intellectual ties between Islam and Christendom maintained by Jews throughout the medieval era of confrontation. And this was no biblical

or rhetorical Hebrew - while even the best student of theology cannot contrive to talk cooking or medicine or gardening with the Hebrew he himself has learned, many Jews were able to do just that. They knew the Hebrew of the Law Codes and the Commentaries, representing life in the raw in Galilee and Judea. It is not uncommonly appreciated how tightly Judaism knits into the fabric of everyday life; to call Hebrew a language of religion is to miss the point that the language, like the religion, has always concerned itself with how you work, how you sleep, how you heat fluids on the Sabbath, how King David heated fluids on the Sabbath and how gas/electricity/laser-beam users might heat fluids on the Sabbath.

Jews could speak it, then, but they did not. Why they did not (and had not since ceasing to be a majority in their land almost two millennia ago), we may never know. Yiddish they carried with them, on their centuries of wanderings through Eastern Europe, but not spoken Hebrew. A hundred years ago, indeed, a steady drift away from traditional Judaism - and the gathering momentum of the flight of three-and-a-half million Jews to Western Europe and across the Atlantic - bodied ill even for the attention of Hebrew in prayers. Nowhere was the despair at this loss felt more keenly than among those Westernized intellectuals who, since the French Revolution, had fondly fancied that Hebrew could fit the role of a Jewish Latin; that a modernized Hebrew could promote the secular Jewish muse and mind. But where Jews ceased to speak and write in Yiddish, they preferred to switch to German or Russian, not to Hebrew - which appeared to be a lost cause.

Yet today more than 3 million Jews have Hebrew as their first language - in Israel. How did this recovery occur? How could a few hundred radical Zionists turn the tide - arriving from Eastern Europe to join the 25,000 Jews long established in the Holy Land, and suggesting to impoverished Jewish farmers in Galilee that they should (a) stop talking Judeo-Arabic or Yiddish, and (b) adopt a tongue that neither they nor anyone else actually spoke? The revival of a dead spoken language had never been heard of, let alone one silent for close on 1,700 years and

eroded of an entire colloquial layer. All the sociolinguistic evidence was against it. Irish, still widely spoken at the turn of the century and symbol then of the Republican struggle, ultimately capitulated under the economic-cultural weight of English; Literary Arabic (in regular use as an inter-Arab lingua franca) has not, for all the official disapproval of the local Arabic vernaculars, succeeded in establishing itself as a "first language". Add to this the strong French and German influences in Ottoman Palestine (Jewish schools and enterprises were largely French or German-owned), and the resistance to any change on the part of the traditionalist majority, and it seems impossible that Eliezer Perelman could have moved a whole generation to speak an unspoken language.

Perelman (better known by his Hebraized surname Ben Yehuda) recognized the importance of linguistic factors in the nationalist struggles across Europe. Convinced that a Jewish homeland could not be built on Yiddish - then generally considered an unsophisticated "jargon", as well as being just one Jewish language out of many - he made his young wife pledge to speak with him only in Hebrew (which was difficult, as all she knew was the little he'd taught her from the best gestures and signs), writes Ben Yehuda's biographer, Jack Fellman. Their son, born in 1882, was to become the first Hebrew-speaking child. "When visitors came to see the baby, Ben Yehuda would make him go to sleep so that he would not hear their foreign languages . . . The Ben Yehuda home became an experimental word-factory and the two parents would search for and/or invent words in Hebrew for doll, cradle, blanket, towel . . . Many of the child's *de novo* creations too were excitedly seized upon and adopted, for example, his words for spinning-top and napkin."

Ben Yehuda's key move was to start teaching in Hebrew. The Zionist revolutionary teachers in their village schools and nurseries followed him, haltingly: arithmetic in Hebrew, geography in Hebrew, and so on. Within ten years hundreds of children heard only Hebrew all day long, played their games in it and played with their brothers and sisters in it. The Israeli

scholar Bar-Adon has identified this interaction of "sibling generations" as the crux. Once internalized by children who had picked it up from other children, Hebrew was once more like any other language, with an internal logic all its own. Since when it has never ceased evolving.

However, the fiercest struggles were still to come: to convince that generation, now adolescent, that Hebrew had the same value as French or German for their livelihood; to talk parents into talking the language of their children; to harangue the non-revolutionary Jewish majority into joining them. From Zionists abroad they could squeeze no sympathy - to them, the whole idea of speaking Hebrew seemed even crazier than sailing off to live in a sterile, malarial land.

In 1913, with the local Jewish population in Israel now numbering 80,000, the Hebrew movement gambled on its future. The first polytechnic in the Middle East was going up in Haifa, and its German sponsors took it for granted that teaching would be in German. Palestinian Jews vowed it would be in Hebrew, even if the lecturers had to stop and search for the word for "oxygen" or "ellipse". En masse they demonstrated, struck, and won.

The political watershed came in London in 1919, with the British government's decision that "English, Arabic and Hebrew are now recognized as the official languages in Palestine". The activists had done a good job. In Parliament, the Earl of Crawford, replying for Earl Curzon, stated, "I am advised that the Hebrew language recognized officially is classical Hebrew with such modifications as modern conditions require, and that the percentage of the Jewish population in Palestine speaking this particular style of Hebrew is probably between 60 and 70" - an inflated figure. *The Times* reported: "Lord Trevelyan said Yiddish, which was used by the Jews in Palestine, bore the same affinity to classical Hebrew that pidgin-English did to the English of Addison." In such ways is the fate of languages decided.

Few students of the Middle East have an appreciation of what the rebirth of Hebrew implies, in socio-

political terms, about the force of the Zionist revolution. Not the least consequence of the revival has been to bind into one nation the explosive mix of Sephardi and Ashkenazi, religious and secular, radical and bourgeois Israelis. (The Jewish penchant for dissent, together with the old tensions between Jews of different provinces, could well have engendered anarchy.) And remarkably, it is the guttural accent of the "have-nots", the Sephardim, that is deemed the purest.

But the most far-reaching consequence for the wider world, arguably, has been the re-emergence of a Hebraic culture - and with it a distinctive Hebraic-Israeli mentality that few in the West have troubled to grasp. Israeli culture is generally assumed to be more or less Western European. But this is wrong. The foundations of Israeli education are Hebraic, grounded in the Hebrew Bible, which is learned not as myth but as a true record of the ancient Jewish presence and the fount of moral law.

When right-wing extremists quote the Bible at correspondents, they are articulating a deep-seated biblical consciousness that knows no party-political divide. The outsider can hardly know this; nor - unless he read English versions of Yehuda Amichai perhaps, or the *Penguin Book of Hebrew Verse* - can he suspect the depth of biblical imagery in Israeli poetry today. He may not know that "Judea" and "Samaria", terms regularly invested in the West with extremist overtones (as against the puzzling coinage "West Bank"), are Israeli *yehuda* and *shomron* - words evoking the venerable kings of Judah and Samaria, and the popular Jewish name *yehuda*, not to mention *yehuda* "Jew"; or that even the many Jewish words for "Jew" are derived from the Hebrew *yehuda*, not the Latin *Yehuda*, "the Land of Israel".

This Hebraic culture is now being further fortified. In the six years since the Left lost power, Israeli schools have been massively redirected towards traditional Rabbinic Judaism and Jewish history - modes of thinking in which the non-Hebraic Jew has little access. The full effect of this on Israeli life and letters is still to be felt.

Allderman, ended the long filibuster with the Left and returned to the community to the Right. But the conclusion must be treated with caution. To generalize from one or two sample statistics of recent change in voting patterns from Labour to Conservative Jews heavily concentrated in relatively affluent areas such as North London, Ilford North, could be misleading. Harold Pollins has suggested that there is still a large distribution of working class Jews, by no means confined to settlements were attracted to either the Labour or Communist party, who provided the vanguard for defensive action against Mosleyite Fascism, or offered panaceas for unemployment and social ostracism.

The Nazi holocaust and the post-war crumbling of old ghetto walls, hastened by freer social mobility, both upwards and outwards, jolted these set political allegiances. An additional factor, perhaps more potent, was the establishment of the state of Israel, which was supported by the majority across the whole political spectrum. This has since become a sensitive issue, affecting voting patterns in those areas where Anglo-Jewry is concentrated. Even Mrs Thatcher has not been immune from such electoral pressures. During the 1974 election her own, largely Jewish, constituency of Finchley registered a swing of 3 per cent against her - she had supported the Government's October 1973 arms embargo against Israel - as compared with a swing of only 1.2 per cent in the case of John Gorn, the North Hendon Tory MP, who had opposed it; thereby maintaining his own Jewish support.

The anti-Israeli postures of the hard Left and a rapid *embourgeoisement* of Anglo-Jewry have, according to

ALGER C. VAN DEN TOORN
Music of Igor Stravinsky
New York: Yale University Press. £25.
Pp. 240. ISBN 0 300 03093 5

ARAIL DRUSKIN
Stravinsky: His life, works and music
Edited by Martin Cooper
Cambridge University Press.
Pp. 240. ISBN 0 521 24900 7

JOHN J. OJA (Editor)
Stravinsky in 'Modern Music' (1924-1939)
New York: Da Capo Press; London: Europa Ltd, 3 Avenue Street, London WC2.
Pp. 240. ISBN 0 306 70108 4

JOHN KELER and MILEN
Stravinsky: Seen and Heard
New York: Toccata Press, 40 Floral Street, London WC2. Paperback.
Pp. 240. ISBN 0 907 02902 7

One of the outstanding composers of the last half of the century, Stravinsky has been subjected to the most extensive technical analysis. His music has not. The *Kniga o Stravinsky* of Igor Glebov (Boris de Slonov) was a promising beginning; it came out in 1929 and really dealt with the Piano Sonata and the new ballet. The Stravinsky who came out in 1929 and really dealt with the Piano Sonata and the new ballet. The Stravinsky who came out in 1929 and really dealt with the Piano Sonata and the new ballet.

These, as Druskin says, are incontrovertible evidence of "the primacy of his visual imagination, whereas he never on any occasion speaks of literary images playing any part in his ideas or in the actual process of composition. He was in fact a declared enemy of all literary influence in music."

In *Memories and Commentaries* he told Robert Craft how the sight of Hogarth's *Rake's Progress* pictures "immediately suggested a series of operatic scenes to me". And the visual element was also important in listening to music. To quote the *Chronique* again:

"J'ai toujours eu en horreur d'écouter la musique les yeux fermés, sans une part active de l'œil. La vue du geste et du mouvement des différentes parties du corps qui se produisent est une nécessité essentielle pour la saisir dans toute son ampleur. C'est que toute musique crée ou composée exige encore un moyen d'extériorisation pour être perçue par l'auditeur. Autrement dit, elle a besoin d'un intermédiaire, d'un exécutant. Si c'est là une condition inévitable, sans laquelle la musique ne peut arriver jusqu'à nous, pourquoi vouloir l'ignorer ou la déformer? Pourquoi, pour mieux dire, vouloir l'ignorer ou la déformer? Pourquoi, pour mieux dire, vouloir l'ignorer ou la déformer?"

Druskin makes no philosophical conjectures and intrudes little in the way of peripheral discussion but, within the far more limited space at his disposal, throws out suggestive remarks on the differences in style and treatment of the grotesque comedies *Mavra* and *The Rake's Progress*, with the lyrical passages and hinted tragedy in the Hogarth-inspired work. Of the latter he suggests that "there is something of a compromise, something even contradictory in the combination of the conventional and the naturalistic, the grotesque and the emotionally genuine". In a later chapter he enlarges on this duality: "There is a two-fold alienation-effect: the farcical moments destroy the dynamic situations, while the lyrical passages and hinted tragedy in the Hogarth-inspired work. Of the latter he suggests that "there is something of a compromise, something even contradictory in the combination of the conventional and the naturalistic, the grotesque and the emotionally genuine".

But the visual object must not be static, a subject for tone-painting: "A static object cannot be described

Images of motoric energy

Gerald Abraham

simultaneously, which is sustained "above" pulsating (C E G) and (A C sharp E) triads in the chorus, all accountable to Collection III . . .

Whereas Stravinsky's music is for Van den Toorn essentially the product of compositional techniques, for Druskin it is the most important factor in a wider concept of art. Benois has told in his *Reminiscences of the Russian Ballet* how "one of the binding links between us, besides music, was Stravinsky's cult of the theatre and his interest in the plastic arts. Unlike most musicians . . . Stravinsky was deeply interested in painting, architecture and sculpture". And visual impression and imagination were always, if only intermittently, rich sources of musical inspiration. Stravinsky describes in his *Chroniques de ma vie* how

en finissant à Saint-Petersbourg les dernières pages de l'*Oiseau de Feu*, j'entendis un jour, de façon absolument inattendue car mon esprit était alors occupé par des choses tout à fait différentes, j'entendis dans mon imagination le spectacle d'un grand rituel sacré païen: les vieux sages, assis en cercle et observant la danse à la mort d'une jeune fille, qu'ils sacrifiaient pour leur rendre propre le dieu du printemps. Ce fut le thème du *Sacre du Printemps*. Je dois dire que cette vision m'avait fortement impressionné . . . Avant d'aborder le *Sacre du Printemps* . . . Je voulais me divertir à une oeuvre orchestrale où le piano jouait un rôle prépondérant, une sorte de Konzerstück. En composant cette musique, j'étais nettement la vision d'un pantin subitement déchaîné qui, par ses cascades d'arpèges diaboliques, exaspère la patience de l'orchestre, lequel, à son tour, lui réplique par des fanfares menaçantes.

The puppet was of course Petrushka. These, as Druskin says, are incontrovertible evidence of "the primacy of his visual imagination, whereas he never on any occasion speaks of literary images playing any part in his ideas or in the actual process of composition. He was in fact a declared enemy of all literary influence in music."

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or painted in sounds but when that object is set in motion, music can by analogy reproduce the character of that movement - its tempo (a measure of pace) its rhythm (a mode of degree of intensity) and so forth. In this way a visual is transformed into a musical image. Hence it is not with the illustration of an object as such that Stravinsky is concerned in his music but with the nature (tempo, rhythm, dynamic amplitude) of that object's movement. It is therefore easy to understand why different forms of motoric energy - and particularly the clearest manifestations of these, namely the dance - occupy such a significant place in determining Stravinsky's musical forms.

It was presumably the *liveliness* of Hogarth's *Rake's Progress* prints that "immediately suggested a series of operatic scenes". The element of "theatre" is considered only incidentally in Van den Toorn. There are no entries for Meyerhold, Tairov, *Mir Iskussia*, in his index; *Le Rossignol* is practically ignored. *The Rake's Progress* gets a mere page, entirely of melodic harmonic analysis, with a half-page quotation of Stravinsky's own remarks to Craft in *Themes and Epiphany*. This cursory treatment of *The Rake* is typical of Van den Toorn's blinkered approach to nearly all Stravinsky's theatrical works other than some of the "pure" ballets. The only ones he treats at any length are *Les Noces*, *Le Soldat*, *Oedipus Rex*. On the *Histoire* he does indeed expand non-technically and very intelligently; from the clichés "of widely divergent types of music", "a unity is forged":

From this "raw material" a new reality emerges, something, again, peculiarly Stravinsky's own. But we are at the same time not unimpressed of how strange this "unity" must have seemed in 1918; indeed in the wake of the post-Romantic era, how outlandish a concoction it is to all "serious" musicians and to all "serious" audiences.

How was one to react to this music? Was it to be taken seriously? Was Stravinsky serious? It was, in fact, a cool, crisp, brittle mechanization of the musical manners or conventions - and hence, presumably, of the underlying beliefs, sanctities, and spiritualities - of bygone or nearly bygone eras: Cool, crisp, and brittle ("cold" and "heartless"; without sentiment), evidently as if to accentuate the circumstances of our removal, the fact that we the listeners - enlightened, self-conscious Modern Man - are painfully cut off, unable to participate as true believers. It is this felt removal from true participation . . . that somehow accounts for Stravinsky's pertinence, his contemporary guise.

At which point Van den Toorn diffidently admits that "philosophical conjecture of this sort remains quite peripheral to our discussion". One wishes he had allowed himself more "peripheral" discussion of Stravinsky's other works.

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Music (1924-1946) Aaron Copland writes that

today, in the 80s, Stravinsky's unpredictability is no longer a puzzle, much less a shock. The abrupt changes, including the adoption of serialism in the last third of his life, can be viewed as a symptom of his special creative process. Never content to mine the field of past success, he was impelled to reach out for the new, the untrodden. In so doing, he fulfilled the exacting demands of his own nature.

This volume - containing the major articles contributed to the American periodical *Modern Music*, organ of the League of Composers, during the twenty-three years of its regrettably truncated life - turns again and again to this question of Stravinsky's "unpredictability". As Copland says, "An astonishing variety of critical attitudes is revealed. Yet within that range one theme persists: the repeated sharp, unexpected turns in Stravinsky's musical style which continually baffled composers, critics, and listeners." Some of the judgments resuscitated here seem decidedly odd today: for instance Roger Sessions, writing on *Oedipus Rex* in 1928, says it is "said to exemplify a 'Return to Handel'".

Oedipus preserves in a general way the formal lines of the oratorio, of which it also recombines some of the solemnity and stateliness of spirit. But it is the oratorio of Handel, impersonal and almost ritualistic in character, rather than the more dramatic Passion music of Bach, that has served as a general model for Stravinsky - a model to be studied and understood, but to be readapted rather than imitated in any but the broadest fashion.

Copland was on safer ground with *The Fairy's Kiss* where inspiration "par la Muse de Tchaikovsky" is acknowledged on the title-page, and anyone familiar with Tchaikovsky's

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The freedom of the franchise

William J. Fishman

GEOFFREY ALDERMAN

The Jewish Community in British Politics

218pp. Oxford University Press. £17.50. 0 19 827436 X

The Jewish community has never overtly regarded itself as a unitary body acting together out of political self-interest. Any minority ethnic group would be sensitive to allegations that it had. Yet as Geoffrey Alderman contends throughout this book, certain attitudes have developed in the past in which communal concern led British Jews to respond to political issues "in a uniform way or distinct bloc". This would suggest that, from the struggle for Jewish emancipation onwards, and especially in the demand for the franchise, a Jewish "vote" was consciously evoked.

The earlier campaigns were led by a small coterie of wealthy Establishment Jews who individually could possibly have afforded a career in public life at municipal or parliamentary level. It was their determination to break into the upper strata of government, and thereby be accepted as equals in the contest of power, which directed them towards the Whig, and later the Liberal, camps. For it was Radical imperatives and evangelical principles that brought such staunch defenders as Charles Grant and Zachary Macaulay into the fight for emancipation, against Conservative hostility led by the Tory-dominated House of Lords. Yet such

alignments were not as clear-cut as might appear. Popular anti-Semitism could not be ignored by either party. Chartists attacked the persecution of Jews but expressed little sympathy for Jews as a people. (They were defined, *en masse* as predators and conceived of as "jobbers, oppressors and murderers", as enemies of the working class. *Northern Star*, November 13, 1847) While the future Liberal leader, Gladstone, opposed Jewish emancipation for nearly twenty years in the Commons and in print, and even on his "conversion" never lost his dislike of Jews, among the Tories a clutch of consistent supporters included the peers Lords Bexley and George Bentinck and the future Prime Minister, Benjamin Disraeli. It was in effect a Conservative measure in 1858 concerning the amended Oaths Bill, that made the entry of Jews into Parliament legally possible. The fact that they owed little to the Liberals, and the realization that acceptance meant security and integration, soon attracted the Jewish elite towards the Conservative interest.

After 1881, immigrants from Eastern Europe provided ready-made fodder for new political forces to challenge the old. Following the political and economic oppression they had suffered in Russia and Poland, the newcomers faced the realities of social discrimination in Britain, reflected in the virulent xenophobic postures of their hosts, from slum level to that of government spokesmen. Amongst the voices raised to restrict the entry of aliens, the Russo-Polish Jews were those of Jewish Conservative MPs. In 1895 Harry Samuel, Tory candidate in Limehouse, although a Jew himself,

played on local prejudice by openly declaring that he supported "the absolute prevention of Alien Pauper Immigration". In 1900 Lord Rothschild gave his written approval to Major Evans-Gordon, Unionist candidate at Stepney, the leading campaigner for restriction and in that same year founding father of the first quasi-Fascist organization, the British Brothers League.

Hence the appeal, at least to a politically conscious minority of immigrants - the majority were naturally more concerned with the everyday need to find work, feed their families and keep out of trouble - of the new socialist and anarchist ideologies. Alderman is perceptive in emphasizing the value of the German liberalist Rudolf Rocker as the guru of anarchism, who "captured" the imagination of a large body of Jewish immigrants by his advocacy of Yiddish (he, a non-Jew, mastered the language and became editor of the Yiddish radical weekly, *Arbeter Fraind*), his forceful polemics against the Aliens Act of 1905 and his dynamic leadership during the Tailor and Garment Workers' Strikes of 1906 and 1912. Rocker's small band of acolytes were formally anti-parliament but they implied political consciousness to the Jewish workers who, after receiving their "education" in the Anarchist Club, and engaging in the industrial action, eventually moved on to the more realistic alternatives proffered by the Labour Party or Socialist Zionism.

By 1918 Jewish radicalism, in one form or another, was eclipsed by the impact of two events: the Balfour Declaration and the Bolshevik Revolu-

tion, which opened up to labouring Jews the possibility, on two fronts, of the Messianic realization of a Promised Land. Thus, by the 1920s, with the immigrants and their families now constituting the majority of their community, there was a dramatic decline in the numbers of Jews supporting the old parties. As Alderman rightly suggests, the inter-war years saw a Jewish "love affair with the Left". Large numbers in the city settlements were attracted to either the Labour or Communist party, who provided the vanguard for defensive action against Mosleyite Fascism, or offered panaceas for unemployment and social ostracism.

The Nazi holocaust and the post-war crumbling of old ghetto walls, hastened by freer social mobility, both upwards and outwards, jolted these set political allegiances. An additional factor, perhaps more potent, was the establishment of the state of Israel, which was supported by the majority across the whole political spectrum. This has since become a sensitive issue, affecting voting patterns in those areas where Anglo-Jewry is concentrated. Even Mrs Thatcher has not been immune from such electoral pressures. During the 1974 election her own, largely Jewish, constituency of Finchley registered a swing of 3 per cent against her - she had supported the Government's October 1973 arms embargo against Israel - as compared with a swing of only 1.2 per cent in the case of John Gorn, the North Hendon Tory MP, who had opposed it; thereby maintaining his own Jewish support.

The anti-Israeli postures of the hard Left and a rapid *embourgeoisement* of Anglo-Jewry have, according to

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salon music for piano would recognize a number of humble characters elevated to a more distinguished station. The eminent French critic Henry Prunières was outraged: "We seem to be hearing Tchaikovsky played on a mechanical piano, without nuances of expression", and he confesses that he doesn't "get the point".

That a creator of genius should masquerade in the garments of another musician in order to write a work which is, moreover, insignificant, is too fantastic to be understood. Can we believe that the composer, in a hurry for the money to be paid for the piece ordered, preferred writing an imitation like this to the effort of creating an entirely original opus?

Another French critic, André Schaeffner, writing on "Stravinsky's latest composition, *Perséphone*", in 1934, remarks that

the common reproach has been that it represents a certain hoarding of his resources in invention and exploitation of effects. But was this any different in *Le Rossignol* (particularly in *Le Chant du Rossignol* [the orchestral piece that Stravinsky arranged from the opera])? The two works, apart from the difference in their styles, resemble each other strikingly. After twenty years must we accept one and reject the other?

He goes on to compare them:

The Fisherman's song, the Nightingale's air, the Chinese marches, through their sparse development, create a certain impression of immobility, even of barrenness, which is without doubt integral to the conception of the work. It is present to the same degree in *Perséphone*, where a lavish though transparent choral material seems to relieve the aridity, or rather the habitual severity of the music.

These excerpts are typical of the book. Too many contributions are no more than extended concert or ballet notices and, in the nature of such notices, often throw more light on the writers — and they are not all as distinguished as Sessions, Copland, Prunières and Schaeffner — than on the subject. There is, however, an interesting essay on "The Neo-Baroque" by Manfred Bukofzer, who in 1943 had not yet published his classic study of *Music in the Baroque Era*. He

observes that the baroque revival "has already done much to stabilize the often erratic course of contemporary music, less by direct influence than by setting up, as it were, remote controls". But he has surprisingly little to say about Stravinsky whose "lovely *Sonata for Piano* (1924) is patterned in all three movements after the baroque sonata form, and in the first and last movements even the style can be traced to Scarlatti, in the slow movement to Bach". And he suggests that "the pre-eminence of the instrumental idiom in the solo arias of Bach and Handel finds its direct counterpart in the arias of *Oedipus Rex* and [Hindemith's] *Cardillac*". When *Modern Music* ceased publication Stravinsky's latest work was the so-called "Basle" Concerto for strings, which is not mentioned.

Druskin suggests "it is possible to speak of 1945 as marking the beginning of a new upward movement in Stravinsky's development. Right into the fifties, however, this was a splintered development." *Orpheus* and *The Rake* "showed a renewal of interest in neo-classical theatre", while the Mass had its roots in the baroque and even earlier periods. There was no sign yet of serialism: that was to come tentatively in 1952 in the second *ricercar* of the *Canzona* on old English texts, written not long after Stravinsky had heard Webern's String Quartet, Op. 22, which had made a great impression on him. Then came the Septet for strings, wind and piano (or harpsichord) later in the same year, entirely based on one germ, and the more severely constructed *In Memoriam Dylan Thomas* ("Do not go gentle into that good night").

The adoption of serialism was of course the last of those "sharp, unexpected turns in Stravinsky's musical style which continually baffled composers, critics, and listeners". In view of Van den Toorn's passion for the closest possible technical analysis his treatment of the Septet is inexplicable; it gets only three passing mentions although he examines with characteristic exhaustiveness the successive stages in the development of serial technique in the *Canitum Sacrum ad honorem Sancti Marci noninis* of 1955 — advancing from the five-note germ of the Dylan Thomas piece to a full twelve-note series in the "Surge, aquilo" movement — and thence to the totally dodecaphonic *Threni* of 1958.

With "Surge, aquilo" he is in his element, giving it a five-page analysis, while he has little to say of *Threni*. Druskin treats the whole area much more clearly:

From the end of the fifties Stravinsky was stricter in his observance of serial rules; and the question naturally arises whether he was not at first simply a clumsy pupil who could not immediately master the new technique. Even if one can use such an expression of a great master, we must still formulate the question differently; he was not so much a clumsy as a refractory pupil... he was and always remained a tonal composer, adopting serialism and at the same time quarrelling with it, using some of its methods while rejecting its atonal essence. The territory explored by his music is chromatic dodecaphony based on tonal foundations.

While accepting the laws of serial composition, Stravinsky worked out his own technique, using two levels or planes of composition, one controlled by diatonic principles and the other by serial composition... The prime consideration in every case is melodic, intervallic construction of the original idea, the point of departure. In this he was nearer to Webern than to Schoenberg, whose series are thematic, though in another way Stravinsky was diametrically opposed to Webern, who was even more attached to total chromaticism than Schoenberg.

Many readers may be surprised to find how sympathetically not only "formalistic" music but religious works are treated in a book originally published by Gosizdat in 1979.

Dealing with "the implication that what is felt to be evil is amalgamated with the nameless in Stravinsky's music", Hans Keller in *Stravinsky: Seen and Heard* cites "not only the *Symphony of Psalms* but also, well above all, his sovereign *Mass* — to which instructively enough, many a musical believer in the mass as such passionately objects", feeling that "what he rightly expects from music is being suppressed in the most religious of religious compositions, of all works". But Keller is not particularly interested in the religious element in Stravinsky's music; he is much more concerned with its relationship to Webern's on the one hand and

Schoenberg's on the other. "Stravinsky's absorption of Schoenberg's technique was arguably the most important event in the history of music." Yet "whereas, especially in their early stages, Stravinsky's utterances almost throughout echo Webern at the expense of Schoenberg, the implication being that he was 'had it' from Webern, the real future — a status still accorded to the great minor master by a substantial section of *avant-garde* opinion."

This is an interesting point, but it was personal as well as artistic reason for Stravinsky's apparent preference for Webern. He never forgot to forgive Schoenberg's skit on the "kleine Modernsky" in the second of *Drei Saiten* and Druskin remarks that they did not meet until 1940, metres away from each other, mutual friends or acquaintances, in Thomas Mann and Franz Werfel, who were aware that one composer's name was not mentioned in the other's presence. "On the other hand Webern was dead when Stravinsky really knew his music, which (as Druskin it) seemed to him a kind of *Prophetia* of enthusiasm his language was not reserved". Nevertheless Keller in *Stravinsky's serialism* is essential Schoenbergian. In 1955 he composed an article to *Tempo* entitled "The *Memorial Dylan Thomas*: Stravinsky's Schoenbergian Technique", a complete analysis of "Do not go gentle" together with the score. It is in fact non-existent. Again, David Osmond-Smith has much to say about the "Benedictus" of the Fourth Symphony; but he need not dilute his personal feelings into universal laws of composition and then blame Schoenberg for failing to follow them. George Bozarth rightly refers to the risks of reading Brahms's emotional frustrations into the *Lieder*; but too much of his own offering is just known opinion (dull and wrong, in my opinion) of Max Kalbeck's opinion of the poetry and music of "Vorüber".

So the new routes are not without their stumbles and pitfalls; and their directions deliberately by-pass familiar views. Quite right, too, though such will be missed. Thus Arnold Kallal's acute analyses of those powerful sermons, the *Vier ernste Gesänge*, hardly mention their texts are to say they are "sacred" (though apparently not to him). In a Schoenbergian sense these songs are seen to be essentially without words, as if they were really the *Four Serious Vocables*. At the same time there are compensatory gains. James Webster does not speak for his fellow analysts in owning that his schematic interpretations of the *Tragic Overture* "will seem inadequate, even bizarre, to some readers"; and this acknowledgment that musical dissections are very bit as subjective as verbal descriptions is well worth recording.

Keller's stimulating little book is enlivened by Mlein Cosman's insights of Stravinsky conducting 1958 rehearsals during 1958-61.

when triple mensuration and related features could still prove bothersome for singers of limited experience. Some sources transcribe what are already known from notationally refined manuscripts, but present independent works composed in a reasonably plain style. Many of the surviving examples are of English provenance, though a number come from Flanders and some from Italy. These fragments are crucial to understanding of where and by whom polyphony was composed and performed in fifteenth-century Europe, and to our notions of musical theory by providing evidence of the names of individuals and institutions whose names do not appear in the standard textbooks. For the social history of the subject they are as important as the major manuscripts.

It is a pity that for the material, "transliteration" of original notation into simplified graphical representations is consistently preferred to photographs of the sources themselves. After all, the audience of this book will be reading in primary aid to practical transcription, and out for the most part, from facsimiles. Certainly it is a little curious that only illustrations from sources owned by the Bodleian, and that which are given pages from "Mendelssohn's *De Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen* of *Hiroshima*, nothing from the Bodleian is shown at all. That is not an argument (as it is not a transcription book) but a plea for an argument (as it is not a transcription book) for the real thing: perhaps some sighted publisher could be persuaded to issue a companion volume of facsimiles, particularly now that *Musikalisches Schrifttum* has become a rarity. That would be a real boon to the teaching of music.

MUSIC

Intertextual genetics

Eric Sams

ROBERT PASCALL (Editor)

Brahms: biographical, documentary and analytical studies
212pp. Cambridge University Press.
£20.
0 521 24522 2

This symposium costs an average £2 per twenty-page essay, each by a noted specialist. Most are good value, and one is outstanding. At first glance it all looks quite like old times, with such familiar topics as cultural background, drama, music, symphonies and Mozart influence. But the five detailed analytical studies, plus the editor's own expertise on music-editing, confirm that this is high technology for advanced students. As the preface puts it, the contributors are taking "routes into genetic intertextuality". The music-loving public can only wish them luck as it waves them goodbye.

To austere an approach exacts equally severe standards of scholarly accuracy and objectivity. Michael McGavere offers a timely and often perceptive account of Brahms's eclectic absorption in contemporary science, philosophy, art and literature; he would not be told that "A. W. Schlegel's *Lectures*" is "significant" when it is in fact non-existent. Again, David Osmond-Smith has much to say about the "Benedictus" of the Fourth Symphony; but he need not dilute his personal feelings into universal laws of composition and then blame Schoenberg for failing to follow them. George Bozarth rightly refers to the risks of reading Brahms's emotional frustrations into the *Lieder*; but too much of his own offering is just known opinion (dull and wrong, in my opinion) of Max Kalbeck's opinion of the poetry and music of "Vorüber".

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From the nursery

John Warrack

LARRY TODD
Mendelssohn's Musical Education:
A Study and Edition of his Exercises
in Composition
212pp. Cambridge University Press.
£21.24 £55 5

In 1924, at a celebration after the performance of Mendelssohn's Fourth *Die beiden Nefen*, Carl Zelter only declared that his pupil could not be a composer of his own. In the company of Bach, Haydn and Beethoven, Mendelssohn was within a few years of his fifteenth birthday; and for all his faults, was a serious and remarkable musician, not given to the kind of pronouncements which Zelter has gone down in history as the epitome of the crusty pedagogue, possibly even contributing to the "Kinderschreck" of "Kinderschreck" in the twelve-year-old Mendelssohn. And it may be noticed that the young Mendelssohn, let alone of the Mendelssohn, let alone of the Mendelssohn, was enduring. But

and applauding. But I think that many of Dr Webster's readers will find him illuminating, even revelatory. He even achieves a convincing correlation between the lay-out of the overture's individual features and its expression of sadness. The latter suggests to me that its opening theme may embody a motto in every sense, with the acronymic connotations of "F. A. E., 'frei aber einsam'". On any analysis there is no doubt that the inward aspect of Brahms's chess-player, punster and musical encipherer in the Schumann tradition is especially amenable and propitious to intellectual appraisal even when, as in Jonathan Dunsby's ingenious ascriptions of thematic unity to the *Fantasia* Op. 116, its results are more speculative than verifiable. Brahms is rightly seen, therefore, in his 150th anniversary year, as both the culmination of an old era and the inauguration of a new one.

The German school is best equipped to instruct us on that historical perspective, an assignment effectively fulfilled by Imogen Fellinger on the undeniably formative Mozart influence, and by Siegfried Kross on the symphonies, including their Schumann affinities. Virginia Hancock writes well on what Brahms absorbed from early choral music, Italian as well as German, into his own. It is good to learn that the supposedly lost *Missa canonica* of 1856 has surfaced in time for first performance in Vienna this May. Its already known "Benedictus", duly cited as the first of some seventy well-reproduced music examples and plates, looks especially interesting in its thematic and textual links with the First Piano Concerto.

Last, and best, there is the editor's own essay on Brahms and the definitive text, which itself deploys some well-nigh definitive criteria and expertise. I trust the sponsors of the planned *Neue Gesamtausgabe* will take due note of this outstanding scholarship, the more impressive in my view for being directed to a practical end, as well as for demonstrating the far from well-documented fact that the logical is a necessary component of the musicological. I have to add though that Robert Pascall is better on Brahms's editorial blue-pencilling than his own. Clarity begins at home; and the text of this symposium needed better translation in places (eg. Brahms "conceiving from the piano") and sterner discipline throughout for such lazy phrases as "A different question to arise from speculating about the unity of this collection is the nature of the unity of its elements" and so forth. A bibliography would have been useful; of course all the Max Kalbeck references should have been included in the index, which is generally too selective; there are one or two small but tiresome errors.

musical advice, that Berlioz's *Faust* setting was "an incestuous abortion". Even as Mendelssohn was earning his accolade from the old man, he was beginning his own voyage upon the seas of Romanticism, and suggestions of Field, of Moscheles, of Weber and Beethoven were beginning to seep into his style.

But the early days — which for the prodigiously gifted young Felix were virtually the nursery days — were occupied with the strictest possible study of the old masters, which for Zelter meant the great teacher of his own teachers Kimberger and Pasch, J. S. Bach. From the Denke Collection in the Bodleian, R. Larry Todd has sorted and arranged the manuscripts of Mendelssohn's juvenile composition exercises; and his exhaustive study of them really has two-fold value. In the first place, the student who pores through the actual music examples that form half the book can observe the patient craft that was added to natural genius, not to mention the extremely traditional instruction that was then the rule in Berlin.

More importantly for most readers, there are demonstrated some of the characteristics that were to mark Mendelssohn's art. His devotion to Bach, as with the famous revival of the *St Matthew Passion*, was enduring. But

In constant upheaval

Paul Griffiths

DAVID SCHIFF

The Music of Elliott Carter
371pp. Ernst Eulenburg Ltd, 48
Great Marlborough Street, London,
W1. £22.50.
0 903873 06 0

American music is so difficult. How, John Cage once asked himself, could one make people free without making them foolish? And it is not only his *l'esprit-faible* music that demonstrates the elusiveness of the serious and sensitive in the land of the free, musical follies have waited at every turn. That most of them have been interesting, too, is only a measure of how hard it is to be consistently foolish. There is the example of Charles Ives, becoming a law unto himself but still speaking powerfully to the rest of us, or Milton Babbitt, pretending that composition is a kind of academic research but creating the most marvelous music, or Cage again, disclaiming authority but smiling, sunny and wholly himself on every random page.

Upon this field of magnificent Don Quixotes, one man has had the audacity simply to be a great composer: Elliott Carter. For Carter there seems hardly to have been any doubt that his business was making masterpieces; for the last thirty years he has created little else. This has made him a composer of a European sort, for the composing of masterpieces is not something that Americans have much gone in for. It is not surprising, therefore, that Carter's reputation should be as great on this side of the Atlantic as on the other. Two of his last three works had their first performances in England; the third, his *Triple Duo*, was written for an English ensemble, the Fires of London. And now a London publisher is responsible for initiating the first study of his music, appearing in his seventy-fifth year.

The first thing to be said about David Schiff's monograph is that it is as rare among American books on music as Carter is rare among American composers. In other words, it is humane. It does not suppose that music has no meaning beyond what can be expressed in hard-nosed structural analysis, nor does it imagine that pieces can be explained by a few ecstatic remarks of approval. The tone is sympathetic to Carter, even at times celebratory; but then anything else would be irresponsible in the first major survey, and Schiff's inside view (he was Carter's pupil) is thoroughly beneficial when it is so watchful and so well matched by observations of the world outside.

This also shows in his lifelong fascination with chorales (as a living style, not an invocation of the past as with Wagner), and in his habit of surrounding his "material" with a "dangerous" amount of "contrapuntal complexity". Todd has already, in an article in *19th Century Music* in 1979, shown how such an apparently effortless piece as the *Hebrides* overture had to go through several revisions before the worried composer felt that the needless complexity had gone and that there was a true balance between Classical form and Romantic content. One is tempted to wonder whether Zelter's firm tethering of the young Mendelssohn's talent in the music of a past age may have affected his ability to grow and to weather the storms of Romanticism; one to lay at Zelter's door the charge of responsibility for Mendelssohn actually failing to take his place with Bach, Haydn and Mozart.

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This helps to make it what it most needed to be: a link between Carter's music and his reputation, for the latter has tended to burgeon beyond experience of the former, especially when performances remain rare and many major works are available here only on specially imported records. Schiff provides the background, the information and the orientation for a true appreciation of Carter's achievement, and he does so by attacking first the central questions. What distinguishes Carter's music and makes it important? And what are the features that give his style elasticity within the boundaries of this personal identity?

The preparatory chapters on aspects of style — rhythm, form, texture and harmony — are plain, to the point and cogent. Doubts arise only about Schiff's coinage of the term "epiphanic development", though this seems to be owed to Carter himself. The essence of Joyce's epiphanies is surely that they are single and highly unusual events, whereas Schiff's "epiphanic development" is the common process in Carter's music and could be better described as perpetual evolution, for Carter's musical world is one of constant rushing upheaval. That is what makes his works so exciting to hear and so hard to analyse.

When it comes to analysing particular works — and the bulk of the book is a voyage through everything from a 1928 Joyce song to the *Night Fantasies* for piano of 1980 — there is no room for exhaustive dismemberment, and happily so. It is, after all, easier to listen to such a stunning piece as Carter's First Quartet than it would be to unravel the dozens of pages that any adequate analysis would have to occupy (the same is true of a Beethoven quartet). It is also more fun. What Schiff does is to add to one's enjoyment by providing map references and compass bearings. He

points out the themes, charts the forms, identifies the underlying harmonies and quotes key moments from the storm (there are 120 music examples, all in full score, and forty charts of analysed elements).

All this is leavened with a gift for metaphor normally distrusted by American musicologists, as when he describes how the first violin at the end of the First Quartet "completes the motion of the work in solitude, slowing the music to stillness on a celestial high E, a single star in the desert sky". For anyone who has heard the work, this is not just vain poeticism but a valid pointer to the nature of Carter's imagination. Similarly Schiff's references to other arts (Hart Crane provides a potent sub-theme of the book) fertilize the argument and suggest that Carter's emergence as the first authentic American great composer depended on there being a rich, authentic American culture, incorporating the work of composers (Ives, Varèse, Weill), poets (Crane, Lowell), choreographers and painters.

As much appreciation of that multifarious tradition is shown here as of Carter's multifarious music, and the book is backed by a comprehensive bibliography, discography and work catalogue. I can think of no living composer who has been better served.

Two books on Benjamin Britten reissued recently in paperback are Michael Kennedy's *Britten*, in the "Master Musicians" series (356pp. Dent. £5.95. 0 460 02201 6), which is divided into "Life" and "Music" (the latter including brief accounts of all Britten's major compositions) and has a calendar, list of works and discography; and Eric Walter White's *Benjamin Britten: His Life and Operas* (322pp. Faber. £7.95. 0 571 11946 8), which is thoroughly revised and updated to include chapters on Owen Wingrave and *Death in Venice*.

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Editing Giuseppe Verdi

Julian Budden

Ours is the age of the Critical Edition—not to be confused with the mere Collected Works. The difference can be seen by comparing the old Mozart *Werke* with the *Neue Mozart Ausgabe* begun in 1955, the first little more than an assembly of old Breitkopf editions, the second based on primary sources, including the autograph where available, and equipped with a helpful apparatus criticus prepared by an accredited scholar. The Critical Edition aims at being practical as well as scholarly. All notational signs are updated except where no modern equivalent exists, as in the case of the inverted wedges to be found over some of Mozart's notes; editorial additions are all indicated typographically; each score is supplied with corresponding material. Such are the principles which have guided the Berlioz Society's edition, begun in 1967, and the Critical Edition of the Works of Giuseppe Verdi, launched in 1976.

As befits an operatic composer, the Verdi edition had a dramatic origin. Ever since the late 1950s the Australian conductor Denis Vaughan, then working in Italy, had been proclaiming that Ricordi's printed scores of Verdi and Puccini contained discrepancies from the autographs that seriously distorted the composer's intentions; and that after comparing the autograph of *Falstaff* in Ricordi's archives with the published version he had found not less than 27,000 falsifications in that opera alone. By 1961, when the Verdi copyright was about to expire according to Italian law and the Casa Ricordi was applying to the Government for an extension of it, Vaughan's crusade had created a scandal. Leading critics and conductors took sides; questions were asked in the Italian Senate. Vaughan's chief adversary was Giulio Confalonieri, one of the most colourful personalities of the Italian musical world, who, after lambasting his opponent in the columns of the magazine *Epoca*, of which he was music critic, challenged him to a public debate before a panel of professional musicians. Here he attacked the

conductor with a personal savagery which made the most violent of English polemics seem like polite drawing-room conversation. Listeners learned of the "young man in the ill-fitting suit" (Italians always expect Englishmen and presumably Australians to be well-dressed) who "caded free meals in the canteen of the Via Salomone" and much else besides. Nevertheless the panel's verdict, that Vaughan had not made good his claim, can hardly be faulted. Too many of the "discrepancies" referred to passages where in the autograph the composer had, say, his first violins *plausissimo* and had left his seconds, violas, cellos and basses without any dynamic marking at all. The editor had extended the *pp* to the lower strings as well, knowing that they could not play otherwise without upsetting the balance. To count such as all indicated typographically, each score is supplied with corresponding material. Such are the principles which have guided the Berlioz Society's edition, begun in 1967, and the Critical Edition of the Works of Giuseppe Verdi, launched in 1976.

However, once the tumult and the shouting had died it became evident to all musicians, the Casa Ricordi included, that there was room for improvement here and that a critical edition would be desirable. The orchestral score of *Macbeth*, for example, that is currently available for hire has been "edited" not by a scholar but by an experienced conductor of a generation that was not above a little "seasoning" or "re-voicing" for the sake of effect. On the other hand even the composer's autograph is not always an infallible guide to his final intentions. The copyist's score and material used for the first performance may contain modifications sanctioned by him but not subsequently entered into the original manuscript (this is especially true in the case of *Falstaff*). Anyone who examines the Venice score of the original *Simon Boccanegra* of 1857 will find a more elaborate version of the ending of Paolo's "racconto" than the one he knows. The explanation lies in a letter of Verdi's to Tito Ricordi enclosing the simpler version and begging him to

print it in all subsequent scores since which made the most violent of English polemics seem like polite drawing-room conversation. Listeners learned of the "young man in the ill-fitting suit" (Italians always expect Englishmen and presumably Australians to be well-dressed) who "caded free meals in the canteen of the Via Salomone" and much else besides. Nevertheless the panel's verdict, that Vaughan had not made good his claim, can hardly be faulted. Too many of the "discrepancies" referred to passages where in the autograph the composer had, say, his first violins *plausissimo* and had left his seconds, violas, cellos and basses without any dynamic marking at all. The editor had extended the *pp* to the lower strings as well, knowing that they could not play otherwise without upsetting the balance. To count such as all indicated typographically, each score is supplied with corresponding material. Such are the principles which have guided the Berlioz Society's edition, begun in 1967, and the Critical Edition of the Works of Giuseppe Verdi, launched in 1976.

But such an edition is an expensive undertaking, and the Verdi project has had to wait several years until the University of Chicago Press offered its services in partnership. An editorial committee was then formed, with Philip Gossett of the University of Chicago as co-ordinator. The first opera chosen was *Rigoletto*, partly because it poses fewer problems than most, and partly because a critical edition of it had already been begun by the Haydn scholar H. C. Robbins-Landon, who needed only to be asked to complete it. The usual delays and vicissitudes followed. After giving invaluable advice in the laying out of guidelines, Robbins-Landon withdrew from both the editorial board and the editorial board of *Rigoletto* and was replaced in both functions by Martin Chusid from the University of New York, who as Director of the American Institute of Verdi Studies had done much to bring about the joint publishing venture. The new *Rigoletto* appeared in print this year and was given its baptism on March 13 at the Vienna Opera under Riccardo Muti (always a good friend to Verdi scholarship). The occasion was not free of incident. Renato Bruson as Rigoletto was much appreciated for his beautiful tone and sensitive musicianship; Edita Gruberova likewise for the range of colour and expression which she brought to Gilda. But Franco Bonisolli, a last minute and unsatisfactory replacement for the Duke, was booed and jeered throughout. There were some boos for Muti as well, though whether directed against him personally or the edition it is hard to say. That the publicity attending it had aroused some hostility among the notoriously conservative

Viennese had been made clear in previous days when, at a "congress" associated with the performance, a certain large man made a highly offensive speech denouncing the edition as a "razz" make money for the two publishers; among the audience showed that was not alone in his view. Piero Pierluigi Petrelli, director of the Italian Institute of Verdi Studies, a speaker was firmly put in his place without a scene and nothing less was heard from him.

Meanwhile, what differences were to the ear as between the new version and the old? Was the experience of viewing the newly cleaned *Buffalo* the Uffizi? Well, hardly. The average opera-goer would be surprised by the absence of certain notes to which he is accustomed, and those high notes do not appear in the score of *Rigoletto*; their inclusion otherwise is not under editorial control. You do not need a critical edition to tell you that the peculiar note of the monologue "Parliamoci" is an E, not a G. The singer knows it does the conductor; but a G it will unless the conductor has the will to the authority to decree otherwise.

So, one might ask, what is the point of a critical edition if it does not produce any audible surprise? The answer is that it exists for the benefit of the listener but not the performer. By making the author's intentions clear as possible it enables him to resolve certain ambiguities and to make certain decisions of which, once he is taken, the audience is unaware. It sees a "p" in square brackets or a phrase mark in a dotted line he knows it for an editor's marking and is therefore free to disagree with it, however reasonable. The myth of the "unmusical" musicologist, the scholar who seeks to clip the wings of a performer's inspiration, dies, though exploded more than 100 years ago by Thurston Dart in a book, *The Interpretation of Music*, scholarly edition allows the performer more freedom, not less. The *Rigoletto* is an achievement for which every conductor, singer and pianist should be grateful.

their largest purveyor, University Microfilms, 30-32 Mortimer St, London W1, tends towards invisible staves and stems.

Film has generally been the medium for the reproduction of source materials, since that is the format in which most libraries respond to individual orders. An interesting recent development has been the reproduction of extensive archival collections—though this is something that has been normal in some disciplines for many years. Brighton, Sussex) has issued the bulk of the manuscript music in the major collections at Christ Church, Oxford, and St Michael's College, Tonbury, has started with several groups of sources at the Bodleian, and announced similar series from the British Library and the Royal College of Music. Such large projects are useful not only for diminishing scholarly travel, but for sparing the fragile sources unnecessary use. Some questions can only be answered by direct examination of the document, but for many a reproduction is adequate. It has become quite normal for libraries to offer reproductions for visiting scholars to consult rather than original manuscripts; it is sensible to arrange for the reproductions to be distributed commercially.

It is not only early sources which need filming for preservation. The poor quality of paper used for much music printing is a continual worry to those concerned with the preservation of nineteenth and twentieth-century popular music. There is much to be said for filming complete collections before they disintegrate. But there are difficulties. One is the problem of the quality of prints from microform. Much of this music is required for performance; even when it is required for study, one cannot assume that the

person needing it can assimilate it on screen. But few reader-printers are paper strong enough to stand up to music-stand, and unless printed on double-sided, an enormous number of time is wasted sticking copies together to allow for minimal and sure turns. The musician also needs a paper that does not disintegrate. The pencil marking and erasing, and the technology will soon solve this.

The other problem is copyright. A librarian will permit reproduction of any twentieth-century song without checking that it is out of copyright, do that for, say, a whole collection of songs of the First World War will make the project utterly unworkable for any potential microform publisher, even if such copyright owners as were traced required no fee. But most of the songs are so short that the economic way of storing them in microfilm seems to be the only one.

The prospect of cheap microfilm versions of the complete works of the major composers was exciting when first advertised a few years ago, first instance by University Music Editions. Now the scholar and performer can afford to have their own reproduction of the complete works of the composer at home. Alas, the price was not low enough for this to happen. It is not the degree of miniaturization possible. But now, with the advent of photocopying one page from a microfilm, the prospect of a complete work being made for a few pence is becoming a reality. The scholar and performer can now have their own reproduction of the complete works of the composer at home. Alas, the price was not low enough for this to happen. It is not the degree of miniaturization possible. But now, with the advent of photocopying one page from a microfilm, the prospect of a complete work being made for a few pence is becoming a reality.

The theme of a woman between two men is taken up in another play where Arbusov displays his greatest skill in characterization. *Once Upon a Time* (1973), Yuri Trifonov will know it as *Love of the Old Arkady*; here the girl, her father, and her mother are the main characters. *Crucial Games* (1978),

Grappling with SMERSH

Michael Nicholson

ALEXANDER SOLZHENITSYN

Victory Celebrations: A Comedy in Four Acts
Translated by Helen Rapp and Nancy Thomas

86pp. £4.95

0 370 30486 1

Prisoners: A Tragedy

Translated by Helen Rapp and Nancy Thomas

148pp. 5.95

0 370 30487 X

Bodley Head

Solzhenitsyn came out of Ekibastuz labour camp in March 1953 with an eight-year sentence behind him and some 10,000 lines of original verse and prose locked in his memory. Among them were the four-act comedy *Victory Celebrations* (more usually known as *Fast of the Victors*) and seven of the twelve scenes which make up the tragedy *Prisoners*. In the precarious conditions of his internal "exile in perpetuity", Solzhenitsyn completed *Prisoners* and began a third play, *The Love-girl and the Innocent*. To this

he added the two "new" plays far surpasses the immediate question of their serviceability in these translations. Apart from the long poem *Prussian Nights* (1950), *Victory Celebrations* is the earliest substantial piece of writing by Solzhenitsyn to appear in print. In fact, *Prussian Nights* and *Victory Celebrations* once formed Chapters 9 and 10 respectively of *The Road (Dorozhenka)*, a vast parent-work which accounted for the bulk of Solzhenitsyn's creative and mnemonic achievement while in captivity.

In *Prussian Nights* we were swept into East Prussia with the narrator and his artillery unit in the closing stages of the Second World War, and were caught up with him in an orgy of retribution and licence which his conscience struggled in vain to accommodate. In *Victory Celebrations*, we see that same narrator a few days later, this time from without.

Julie Curtis

ALEXANDER ARBUZOV

Selected Plays

Translated by Ariadne Nicolaeff

350pp. Pergamon, £9.95

0 08 02548 X

Arbusov, now in his seventies, is one of the most popular establishment playwrights in the Soviet Union. His humorously lyrical plays take as their principal theme the spiritual development of the individual, and they appeal to Soviet audiences by the way they trace the varying character and experiences of successive generations during the Soviet period. For British audiences, more familiar with a comic tradition which feeds on preconceptions of class, Arbusov's plays present a certain novelty; this, together with their historical interest and reflection of universal human emotions, has enabled several of them to be produced successfully in this country. But they have not been

immediately received by the critics; their positive, moral endings, their bright optimism and their heroes who discover a vocation in self-sacrifice, seem naive or insincere to us. The selection of five Arbusov plays in English allows us to consider whether it is principally the lack of political realism in them which, as Richard Cullen argues in his foreword, provokes such misgivings about the significance of Arbusov's work.

When Arbusov looks back to the interpretations of 1928 in *The Twelfth Hour* (1938), he consciously parodies a Chekhovian setting as a counterpoint to a play that is anything but nostalgic. Looking forward, beyond the abolition of private enterprise, to the more utopian world where all monopolies—in capital, in art, in knowledge or in love—will equally be overthrown. The 1964 play *The Promise* is guardedly optimistic about the post-Stalinist era. The three characters who first meet during the siege of Leningrad later come to recognize that the fact of having survived at all places a burden of responsibility on them. In 1946 the heroine chooses the wrong husband, but this decision can be reversed in 1959, since keeping faith with the past has no intrinsic value: even if they have failed to fulfil their apparent promise, it is the future, the ability to start afresh, which really counts.

In her introduction, the translator asks a very pertinent question: "Is Russian the play supposed to be?" The answer to which is surely not to be found in Nicolaieff's Russianized English. The translations as they stand would, one feels, be painful for the actors to deliver; as two characters in *The Promise* are made to say: "Does it hurt?"—"Very."

As British publishers of *The Love-girl and the Innocent*, the Bodley Head now add the remaining two works to their list, following the belated appearance of the Russian texts two years ago as part of Solzhenitsyn's authorized collected works.

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Happiness ahead

juxtaposes a young man's Moscow flat and a geologists' camp in Siberia: during the play the young artist comes to recognize that his life-style is paradoxical, while the geologist learns the human cost of excessive dedication to his work.

The translator, Ariadne Nicolaeff, has had a long acquaintance with the author and his work, and her enthusiasm is evident in the production histories and photographs included in this glossy edition. It is clearly designed to attract the interest of potential British producers. This publication also assumes a certain importance in the light of the major 1981 Soviet edition of some twenty of Arbusov's plays, which cuts out a number of political references included when the plays were first published separately in the early 1960s. Restored in Nicolaieff's text are comments on the essentially capitalist nature of the peasant class, references to denunciations and to the cult of personality, and a conviction expressed at the end of *The Promise* that the 1930s "will be produced successfully in this country. But they have not been

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Sergei Nerzhin (close kin to Gleb Nerzhin of *First Circle*) is a serious, somewhat gruff young lieutenant, depicted with considerable irony, but already well launched upon his spiritual odyssey. While attending a sumptuous improvised banquet immediately behind the front-line in honour of a fellow-officer, he becomes involved with a callow, but dangerous investigator from Military Counter-Intelligence (SMERSH), and a woman who is attempting to rejoin her "traitor" husband, now fighting alongside the Germans with Vlasov's Russian Liberation Army. The day is saved in circumstances of high farce, but there is a brooding seriousness to much of the play. In more than one character, fierce Russian patriotism grapples with disgust at the political reality of the Soviet Union and scepticism or contempt for its ideology. When this play fell into the hands of the KGB in 1965, Solzhenitsyn had good cause to fear for his safety.

Darker still is the mood of *Prisoners*. Set in a SMERSH prison-cell in 1945, it anticipates *First Circle* and *The Gulag Archipelago* in its presentation of a gallery of political prisoners of widely differing backgrounds, from former POW's to a professor and a *kolkhoz* chairman. It is, moreover, Solzhenitsyn's first portrayal of the interrogation procedures of the Soviet security police. Based in part upon the circumstances of his own first captivity, it also draws heavily upon the biographies of others whom he was to meet in the camps. Among the characters who later reappear in *First Circle* are the anguished communist, Lev Rubin, and the naive hedonist, Imenich.

The spread of innovation

Arnold McMillin

CARL AND ELLENDEA PROFFER

(Editors)

Contemporary Russian Prose

430pp. Ann Arbor: Ardis. \$25

(pbk. \$10).

0 88233 596 0

The last decade and a half has proved to be a rich and exciting period in the history of Russian literature, witnessing the coming to maturity of a wide range of ambitious and innovative writers. That many of them were public and, especially since 1974, also live in the West reflects the increasingly difficult conditions obtaining in the Soviet Union, and has itself been a major factor in many individuals' development. In this connection the significance of the work of Carl and Ellen de Proffer through their Ardis Press can hardly be exaggerated, and it is high praise to say that *Contemporary Russian Prose* represents one of their most valuable publications, bringing together as it does a wide range of modern Russian writers, represented by some of their best short prose.

The most extended item in the collection is: *Sokolov's* *Belshazzar's Feast* (1976), but it is not one of the long short stories or, in the case of Fazl Iskander's *Belshazzar's Feast*, a chapter from a longer work. In addition to the pieces by Sokolov and Iskander, the anthology comprises Vasily Shukshin's *Snowball* (1965), Yuri Trifonov's *The Exchange* (1969), Andrei Bitov's *Life in Windy Weather* (1963-64), and Valentin Rasputin's *Downstream* (1972).

The background to these writers and stories is complex. Although all seven works were written in the Soviet Union, only those by Bitov, Shukshin, Trifonov, and Rasputin have been published here both published abroad as well as at home. Thus, since the death of Shukshin in 1974 and of Trifonov in 1981, and the emigration of Sokolov in 1976 and of Aksenov in 1980, the Siberian Rasputin is now one of the very few important Soviet writers publishing exclusively through official channels. Not all the translations are published for the first

time. The Aksenov and the Shukshin both appeared in Ardis collections in 1979; the Trifonov piece has also been printed several times, and the English version of Sokolov's novel appeared separately in 1977, a year after the Russian text. Several of these earlier editions are, however, out of print, so that republication now is undoubtedly worthwhile.

The pieces in the collection are remarkably varied in style and theme, though each strikes the reader as unmistakably Russian (no fault of the translations). Aksenov's *The Steel Bird* is a fantastic allegory reflecting the city's concerns and major apprehensions of urban Russia. In it he attempts a number of stylistic experiments that, despite the story's relatively early date, look forward to such dazzlingly ambitious novels as *The Burn* (1969-75, published 1980) and *The Island of Crimea* (1977-79, published 1981), which have appeared in the wake of his enforced emigration from the Soviet Union. The experiments with jazz techniques and other linguistic play remove this story far from the sub-Stalinian novel of teenage life with which Aksenov first made his name in the early 1960s.

Pravichikov. Colonel Vorotyntsev, hero of *August 1914*, is here too, fulfilling the prophecy made in that work and breathing defiance at the Bolshevik tormentors of his Russian as he prepares to mount the scaffold. Christian, Vlasovitch, loyal communist, bewildered peasant—all are flung into the melting-pot and all contribute, wittingly or unwittingly, to the impression that Russia has been harnessed in the service of a cynical, death-dealing lie.

Forced to try his hand at poetry by the circumstances of his imprisonment, Solzhenitsyn has little ambition to be judged by his contribution to this genre. Nevertheless, he undoubtedly developed a considerable facility for conveying descriptive narrative and dialogue in verse. As it happens, only the observant reader of these prose renderings will be aware that the whole of *Victory Celebrations* and three scenes of *Prisoners* are, in the original Russian, entirely in verse. The publishers record this fact with only a dozen words of "publisher's note", and this is unfortunately in keeping with editions which relegate such meagre textual information as they trouble to provide to the dust-jacket. In the verse of the original there is a stylized quality which can carry a good deal more in the way of rhetoric and portent than does the prose of the translation. The verse-form of *Victory Celebrations*, in particular, seems consciously to hark back to Gribodov's *Misfortunes of Being Clever*, and with its small cast and single setting it is altogether a more delicate composition than either *Prisoners* or *Love-girl and the Innocent*.

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